



Leicester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Guidance for the Implementation of 'Valuing All God's Children'

Setting the Context

1. **'Valuing All God's Children'** was published by The Church of England Education Office in *Autumn 2017*. The document seeks to offer guidance and support to help Church Schools, Diocesan Boards of Education and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying in schools. It recognises that there is much work to be done in this area.
2. **'Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools'** *Department for Education (DfE) 2014* outlines clear expectations that, regardless of a person's individual views of what is 'right' or 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law and that a school's ethos and teaching should not undermine it.
3. **The Teachers Standards DfE 2011** expect teachers to uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. This includes not undermining fundamental British values.
4. The **'Stonewall School Report'** *Stonewall 2017* states that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) pupils attending 'faith schools' are less likely to report that their school says homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is wrong. Church of England (CofE) Schools were a significant proportion of those included in this 'faith schools' category.
5. **The Equality Act 2010**
The Act protects people from discrimination and harassment. It places a duty on public authorities and educational facilities including local-authority-maintained schools; academies and free schools; local authorities; non-maintained special schools; and independent schools, to be proactive in considering the need to address inequalities. It requires a public authority to have due regards to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' (including sexual orientation) and those who do not and
 - foster good relations between those who share such a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 5.1 The duty does not require schools to eliminate inequality but it requires a school to take those points above into consideration in all that it does. For example, when developing a policy or making decisions a school must assess whether there are implications for people with a protected characteristic.
- 5.2 Compliance with the equality duty will enable schools better to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. Non-compliance could lead to schools failing to prevent the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination on children.
- 5.3 Schools must, under the act, have due regard to eliminate harassment and foster good relations, i.e. must address bullying and prejudice related incidents, not only by responding when an incident occurs but also by taking steps to put into place policies which try and prevent those incidents from occurring or escalating.
- 5.4 The focus of a school is best located within its inclusive ethos. However, to ensure the safety of pupils and to reinforce the authenticity of the school's ethos it is important to promote a strong anti-bullying stance, making explicit the unacceptability of racist, disablist and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic remarks. Schools should be alert to all groups who are particularly vulnerable to bullying including Looked after Children (LAC) and children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND).

Leicester DBE's Response

6. We must be clear about the Church of England teaching. The Church of England **does** welcome people of either sex, any sexual orientation or any gender identity: **Do we show that welcome in our Church Schools?**
7. The Church of England teaches that all are welcome. LDBE's own vision statement reflects this by stating that our aspiration for our schools is that they are 'scandalously inclusive'. We must make sure our schools welcome and include all, following the example of hospitality expressed by Jesus. By affirming all children, we build self-esteem and establish a sense of belonging. Welcoming includes providing opportunities to discuss issues to do with self-esteem, gender identity and sexuality as is appropriate to the age of the children.
8. Church schools have at their heart a belief that all children are loved by God; are individually unique; and that the school has a mission to help each pupil to fulfil their potential. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying alongside all forms of bullying is a factor that can inhibit a pupil's ability to feel safe and have a secure foundation for learning. Church schools have a particular duty to implement measures to combat it.
9. We expect our schools to have a curriculum which meets the requirement of the law - in this case as given in the Equality Act (2010) - to prepare our pupils for life in modern Britain. This means having a curriculum which teaches about difference in a positive way, whether about disability, gender assignment, or LGBT matters.

10. Leicester DBE wants to ensure that the CofE Schools in its diocese are supported to address these issues well. This guidance intends to prompt Church of England schools to seriously address this issue and to challenge schools to ensure that they work towards a consistently welcoming culture for all pupils under the biblical teaching 'to love your neighbour as yourself'.
11. Leaders, including governors, of Leicester Diocese CofE schools should be committed to ensuring they build a school culture and community where all staff members and all pupils feel confident and supported in challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
12. Governors and Academy Trustees/Directors should take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies (including curriculum, policies and school vision and ethos) and ensure that regular reports about bullying and wellbeing are part of the cycle of meetings.
13. Challenging bullying is more than addressing bullying incidents. It is about providing wider opportunities in school life to understand difference, preventing bullying happening. It is also about ensuring that mental health of young people is supported in schools, including supporting young people to grow in resilience.
14. The Church of England teaches that all people are made in the image of God.
15. Both within and out of the wider Christian community, people have strong opinions and beliefs on matters of sexuality and gender identity with many disagreeing with one another. There are many differing views amongst Christians. This may be particularly noticeable if dealing with pupils whose backgrounds are from countries where homosexuality is illegal or viewed very negatively.
16. Whatever an individual's feelings may be, LDBE holds the view that Church schools are required by law to be preparing pupils for life in a pluralistic British society, where it is possible to identify in different ways with respect to gender and sexuality and to express that in relationships. As state funded schools, we must abide by this law. To do this well means talking about equality issues with our children and young people.
17. In our schools we will find people with a range of views about these matters. None of this counters the school's aims or ethos. However, expressing hatred, hostility or acting in ways to demean others is unacceptable.
18. In talking about acceptance of difference and providing curriculum opportunities where difference is explored, same sex relationships and parenting should be mentioned as a fact of some people's lives. For the child with homosexual family members, this will be a signal of recognition that will encourage self-esteem. This should also be the case for transsexuality.
19. It is recommended that all Governing Boards have a nominated lead member on safety and behaviour which will include homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
20. **All** staff should be trained to recognise and understand how to challenge all types of bullying including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and behaviour.

21. Head Teachers need understanding and agreement to deliver this curriculum. The Head Teacher needs to be fully supported by the Governing Board, and the local church, i.e. authorised ministers and clergy. If this is difficult then the Diocesan Director of Education is available to support further discussion.
22. The Diocesan Education team are able to sign-post school leaders to other schools that may have experience of particular matters relating to HBT bullying or related issues.
23. It may be that a school wishes to look at the wider issues of challenging inequality and builds a programme which challenges all inequalities (including homophobia) and introduces children to all sorts of 'difference'.
24. It is Leicester DBE's aspiration that a welcoming, inclusive agenda positively impacts **all** of the school community and not only the children and young people. Governing Boards are encouraged to reflect on this when determining **all** policy.
25. An appropriate curriculum needs to be planned and resourced, staff need to be trained. There is a helpful list of resources available to provide support to schools in 'Valuing All God's Children' *Church of England Education Office Autumn 2017* p. 38 and 39.

Leicester DBE's Questions (not exhaustive) for schools to consider:

- a) What does welcoming all, and being inclusive look like, in terms of those with Special Educational needs, those of different ethnicities, those of different genders, those who would identify as or are homosexual, bisexual, transsexual?*
- b) How can our school be a place where different views on these issues (as in (a) above) are aired and honoured?*
- c) How are we proactive in considering the need to address inequalities?*
- d) How do we have due regard to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation?*
- e) How do we advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' (including sexual orientation) and those who do not?*
- f) How do we foster good relations between those who share such a protected characteristic and those who do not?*
- g) Do we, when developing a policy or making decisions, assess whether they may have implications for people with a protected characteristic?*

Appendix A

Common questions and suggested answers

Schools have found it helpful to develop a script to support staff in answering questions and may find the following useful in preparing their own script.

The following suggested answers are based upon those found in 'No Outsiders in our school' by A. Moffat (Routledge 2016). This book is highly regarded by Educational Psychologists and informs the 'No Outsiders Project' which has been piloted across Leicester City and County during 2017: <http://www.beyondbullying.com/news/2017/05/no-outsiders---pilot-project-for-primary-schools>

How do I explain what 'gay' means to my child (or any other term, adapt the answer as appropriate using these sentence phrases)?

'Gay' is when a man loves a man. 'Lesbian' is when a woman loves a woman. Bi-sexual is when a person can love both men and women. Transgender is when a person feels different from the body they were born into; we were all assigned a gender at birth and sometimes when we get a bit older we may feel differently about that.

But brothers love brothers and sisters love sisters and my dad loves my brother, does that make them gay?

Where two brothers love each other, it does not mean they are gay. This is a different kind of love. We may love our mum, but we don't want to marry our mum. Some people grow up and fall in love with a person of a different gender and some people grow up and fall in love with a person of the same gender and some of these people may want to get married.

What do I say when my son comes home and asks, 'how can two men love each other'?

You say people are all different. Some men do love other men. In the UK, two men or two women can get married in the same way that a man and a woman can get married in civil law.¹ Many people choose not to get married but live together in loving, faithful and committed relationships.

Why are we teaching about being gay in a Christian school when the bible says it's wrong?

The Bible teaches us that everyone is made in God's image and so demands our respect. There are different views about the Bible's teaching in relation to human sexuality. We understand that this presents a tension for you and that there is an ongoing debate about how Christian ethics are applied. However, the Church of England teaches that gay people are welcome in Church.

¹ People of the same sex cannot get married in a church in the Church of England. Christians have different views about whether gay and lesbian people should be able to get married in church.

We are teaching children about the world around them. We are preparing them for life in Britain where society is diverse and they are going to meet different people as they grow up. Our aspiration is that children can engage critically with a breadth of viewpoints in a way that demonstrates respect for the individuals who hold them. We recognise that people have different views and we respect your view and those of people from other faith backgrounds, or of no faith.

The Church of England's Vision for Education, 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' states this:

Healthy religious plurality recognizes deep differences in religion, belief and worldview, understands the history that has led to the present situation, and creates settings where there can be ongoing negotiation in which the diversity of voices is taken seriously.²

I want my child withdrawn from the lessons

The law says you can't remove your child from these lessons. You can withdraw from Religious Education (RE) or sex education lessons. These are not sex education lessons or RE. They are not one-off lessons; the ethos of being inclusive is part of our whole school. It is all round our school. It is not possible to shield children from our school ethos.

You're teaching my child to be gay and I don't like it

We are not teaching your child to be gay. We are teaching your child not to be afraid of difference and to be kind and welcoming to all. Reading a book (*or talking about....*) cannot make a child gay. Visiting a farmer does not make a child a farmer. Visiting a different place of worship does not convert the child.

As a teacher I don't agree with it and don't want to teach about it.

I understand and respect your view point. However, as a school we are required to prepare our children for life in modern Britain, and in the UK it is legally accepted that individuals are, for example, gay or transgender, and that such individuals have rights that are upheld in British law. We are preparing our children to meet people who will be different from themselves, where society is diverse. They need to be able to understand the law of the land they live in.

In the Teacher Standards, it talks about upholding public trust in the profession and maintaining high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school. This is done by showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and having tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

In some instances, teachers are able to withdraw from RE, but this is not RE and so you don't have the right to withdraw from teaching this.

² 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' p5

https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Church_of_England_Vision_for_Education_-_2016_jdYA7EO.pdf

Appendix B

Responding to verbal bullying comments

- a) Develop a whole school approach to deal with these situations*
- b) Agree your wording*
- c) Train your staff*
- d) Tailor our responses to the age of the child*

An example:

Establish Understanding:

'What do you mean by.....?' Or 'Do you know what this means.....?'

Explain meaning

'.....is a word to describe.....not a nasty word to hurt people.'

Or

'..... is not a word you should be using.'

Or

'.....is a word we use to describe.....'not a nasty word to use against people.'

Use empathy/put in personal context

'How would you feel if someone said that to you?'

Or

'That language is really unkind to others'

Or

'It is really disappointing to hear you using language that makes other people feel bad.'

Link to school ethos and policy

'In this school we are kind to everyone and that is important'

Or

'In this school we don't use language like that. We are kind and respectful to everyone'

Appendix C

Scripts to support leaders with transgender issues that may arise

To parents who are concerned about a social transition of which they have not been informed because the parents of the child in question would not agree to sharing information

"I hear and appreciate your concern. The school must protect the confidentiality of any child and a member of the LGBT community is protected by Equalities law. We sought permission to communicate with parents in the class, but this was not given.

I commit to talking face to face to any children individually or in groups to talk about the issue in general, but I am not at liberty to discuss any child in particular."

Statement telling a class that a child in their class is going to make a social transition boy to girl

"For some time now, your classmate Xxxx has felt to be a girl in a boy's body. As some of you know Xxxx has been living life as a girl outside of school. This is how Xxxx feels most comfortable and as people who care for Xxxx and are Xxxx's friends we can show our care and support in a few ways.

Xxxx and Xxxx's family have decided that Xxxx should be a girl at school too. Xxxx will continue to be known by the same name but would like us to use 'she' and 'her' when we talk about Xxxx. I hope we can all try to do that. Sometimes we will make mistakes and Xxxx understands that and will be forgiving if we slip up. Xxxx would like us to respect the choice she has made.

It is okay if you have some questions about this or if you would like some help to understand. Grown ups in school are ready to help you as well as Xxxx to understand and to adjust.

In our school Jigsaw (PSHE) sessions and in our worship, we have been thinking about diversity which means respecting the differences in our beliefs, physical appearance and preferences. For Xxxx this means respecting her choice to live as a girl, in our church school we respect and value everyone for who they are because God made and loves us all - each one of us special."

Appendix D

The Church of England & Human Sexuality

Since the late 1980s the Church of England has explored evolving issues relating to human sexuality, marriage, sexual orientation and gender. On these matters, the Church acknowledges a range of opinions and beliefs within its membership and leadership (reflecting differing attitudes in society generally). It recognises beyond the church, there is ongoing social, cultural, psychological and scientific investigation and research into these issues. No one body or institution can therefore claim the definitive last word on these subjects.

The Church of England strives to be faithful to its inheritance of doctrines, while seeking God's will for the present generations it serves. The classic formula of the basis of Anglican teaching is the threefold approach of Scripture, Tradition and Reason; thus drawing on the Bible, Anglican Church practice (including its forms of worship) and our human intellect to address matters in dispute.

The Church of England's current method of publishing official teachings is through the House of Bishops via the General Synod (the elected body of the Church).

In November 2018, the main documents to emanate from the Church of England relating to sexuality, sexual orientation marriage and gender are as follows:

Issues in Human Sexuality: A Statement by the House of Bishops. 1991, ISBN 071513745X
(Extract: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/issues_in_human_sexuality.pdf)

Civil Partnerships- A pastoral statement from the House of Bishops of the Church of England 2005.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/House%20of%20Bishops%20Statement%20on%20Civil%20Partnerships%202005.pdf>

Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on human sexuality, 2013 (Known as the Pilling Report after the Chair of the group, Sir Joseph Pilling).

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/GS%201929%20Working%20Group%20on%20human%20sexuality_0.pdf

Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations: A Report from the House of Bishops

<http://www.tgdr.co.uk/documents/229P-GS2055.pdf>

Key points arising from these documents and reports:

- The Church of England upholds the inherited view of marriage as being between a man and a woman.
- Acknowledges the issues around homosexuality and marriage are not easily resolved by recourse to the Bible; the scriptural interpretations are contested.
- Recognises loving faithful relationships can take many forms.
- Acknowledges the Church needs to repent of its homophobia and distress this has caused.
- Asserts prejudice or discrimination by the Church or church members because of sexual orientation is unacceptable. Likewise, Christians who hold traditional views about the nature of marriage and the place of sexual activity within it, should not be automatically accused of homophobia.
- The Church should continue to pay close attention to the scientific research into these issues.
- The Church should accommodate all people, whatever their sexuality, gender or background as people made in the image of God.
- The Church recognises that amongst its members are LGBT people and that they should have access to the life of the church and its sacraments. The Church is not able to provide services of blessing for those who enter Civil Partnerships or same gender marriages but calls for a prayerful and pastoral response. It is possible for clergy and other ministers to enter Civil Partnerships and to serve in the Church.
- There is a generational divide on these issues; most young people are more accepting of difference and non-traditional lifestyles.
- The Church sees a distinction between expectations of clergy in their personal lives and laity.
- The Church is committed to a process of continuing to explore the issues around sexuality, marriage and gender and will give further guidance and teaching in the future. The Archbishops in 2017 called for the church to explore what radical inclusion can mean in the light of the Christian scriptures and teaching.

Appendix E

Glossary of terms

It is important to recognise and understand the difference between a person's sex, sexual orientation and gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (or LGBT) people are often talked about as one group, but there are important differences. There are a wide variety of terms that people can use to describe their sexual orientation and gender identity, and the terms people use may change over time.

Gender Identity

A person's internal sense of their own gender, whether male, female, non-binary or something else.

Sex

Either of the two main categories (male and female) assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes used interchangeably with 'gender' to mean 'male' or 'female'.

Sexual Orientation

A person's emotional, romantic and or sexual attraction to another person.

Terms that some people may use to describe their identity

Bisexual

Refers to a person who has an emotional and/or sexual orientation towards people of more than one gender.

Gay

Refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality- some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Lesbian

Refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards women.

Homosexual

This might be considered a more medical term used to describe someone who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards someone of the same gender. The term 'gay' is now more generally used.

Cisgender

Refers to a person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.

Non-binary

An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as male or female.

Trans

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, gender queer.

Transgender man

A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman

A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

Transsexual

Used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

Other terms***LGBT***

An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans.

Queer

In the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but is still viewed to be derogatory by some. 'Gender queer' (alongside non-binary) refers to someone who does not identify within the gender binary of 'male' or 'female'.

Questioning

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Coming out

When a person first tells someone/others about their identity as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans.

Gender dysphoria

Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender reassignment

Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo this usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in your self-identified gender. It is a characteristic that is protected in the Equality Act 2010.

Gender Recognition Certificate

This enables trans people to be legally recognised as their self-identified gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will apply for a GRC and you have to be over 18 to apply. You do not need a GRC to change your gender at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.

Gender Variant

Someone who does not conform to the gender roles and behaviours assigned to them at birth. This is usually in relation to children or young people.

Outed

When a lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

Pronoun

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation –for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their.

Transitioning

The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender they identify as. Each person's journey will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. It also might involve things like telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

Intersex

A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Can identify as male, female, or non-binary.