



New education guidance will 'ask great questions'

The Church of England has launched a major new resource for educational leaders as more than 800 adults and students attended its largest-ever Education Conference.

The publication 'Called, Connected, Committed' draws on the Church of England's Vision for Education, offering structured reflections and questions to support leadership development.

It has been developed with input from students and education leaders from across the country.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Education Secretary Gavin Williamson were among those addressing delegates at the Church of England's 4th annual event on Thursday in Westminster.

The tone was set for an upbeat Conference with music led by the 'I Sing Pop' project, which takes Christian music into primary schools, before students from the Bluecoat Academy, Coventry, Sir Thomas Boteler School in Warrington, and St Mary Redcliffe & Temple School, Bristol sang and played.

Keynote speakers included education adviser and writer Mary Myatt and Dr Paula Gooder, Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral.

The event was led by students from Church of England schools, with stand-out contributions from year-6 student Darian Henry-Ilori from Sneinton Church of England Primary School in Nottingham, and Victoria Paynter, a sixth-former from St Mary Redcliffe & Temple School in Bristol, who gave reflections on the themes of Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills, and Dignity and Respect.

The new guidance, which was launched at the start of the event, consists of 24 Leadership Practices, drawn from the Church of England's Vision for Education (Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, 2016).

Its approach is rooted in wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, community and living well together, and dignity and respect, which are described as being at the heart of the Church of England's educational purpose.

Launching the document, The Church of England's Chief Education Officer, Nigel Genders said that the aim was to "Pose some great questions – not to have ready-made answers.

"This new guidance flows from our passion to equip leaders with a practical theology and create environments where children, young people and adults can all flourish, that means the life in all its fullness which Jesus talks about and which is at the heart of the Church of England's Vision for Education, which should be read alongside.

"But this is neither a quick-fix solution nor a one-size-fits-all approach. It demands time for contemplation and discussion.

"By doing so, we hope those engaging will embark on the kind of profound conversation and reflection which is key to developing the rich leadership practices we are seeking to inhabit."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said that the work of education leaders was of paramount importance and must be backed up by a vision which is simple enough to remember:

"The day-to-day can obscure the vision; pastoral care can obscure the vision; illness, and any number of things can obscure the vision."

"Amidst this, to keep sight of the vision we need our colleagues, and to work together with honesty and prayer," he said.

"Prayer conforms us to what God is like. God shapes us when we pray and in some amazing way, prayer effects the actions of God in our world.

"As Christian leaders, our job is to point not to ourselves but to Jesus Christ – not as heroes, but as those who are shaped by those conversations with God."

'Called, Connected and Committed' was authored by David F Ford of the University of Cambridge together with Andy Wolfe, Deputy Chief Education Officer with responsibility for leadership development, who leads the Church of England's Foundation for Educational Leadership.

Through its ranges of programmes, networks and research, the Foundation works with 1000s of leaders across the country.