

# Putting our Faith in Education



Diocesan Director of Education, Jan Ainsworth, believes the upturn in interest in church schools has a lot to do with their ethos, which places great importance on the care of each individual child. She said, "National research has shown that caring for children is not only good for their personal development but also has a positive and measurable effect on standards."

The Diocese of Manchester looks after more pupils in church schools than any other diocese. There are 195 Church of England schools across 10 local authorities, responsible for teaching 55,000 pupils. Parents recognise the distinctive contribution made by church schools and the high quality of education on offer. Many of the diocese's nine secondary church schools are oversubscribed.

"I believe our investment on church schools has a practical, moral and theological basis. It's with this conviction that the Board of Education, on behalf of the wider diocese, is safeguarding and in interesting ways expanding our distinctive stake in nurture and service."

Rt Revd Michael Lewis, Bishop of Middleton and  
Chair of Manchester Diocesan Board of Education

## What are we about?

- Putting our faith in education: recognising the centrality of faith as a cultural force; responding to the needs of every child in their spiritual growth and development; providing for the religious observance of all faiths.
- Being distinctive and inclusive (Dearing Report The Way Ahead, church schools in the new millennium 2000)
- Being diverse: Manchester's primary schools include St James, Birch in Rusholme where 19 home languages are spoken, and St Thomas, Werneth, with an exclusively Muslim population. C of E schools retain the confidence of families from other faith backgrounds, because 'God is part of this school'.
- Encouraging high levels of attainment. C of E schools account for five of the top 10 schools in Oldham.
- Commitment to difficult areas, where communities are fragmented and poverty and debt are part of everyday experience.
- Helping to build social capital.

## Secondary expansion of Church Schools

There is unprecedented expansion of our secondary church schools. We are embracing the Academy programme because of its commitment to providing for the most deprived communities. We will use the excellent practice of existing schools to raise standards for all.

- Salford – the Salford City Academy opened in 2005 and moved into its state-of-the-art buildings in September 2006.
- Rochdale – the Middleton Academy is scheduled for opening in 2008.
- East Manchester – we plan to help regeneration by sponsoring an Academy with the Methodist Church.
- Bolton – we are partners in the Bolton Academy, serving the most deprived area of the Borough.
- Oldham – we are looking to pioneer a new model of multi-faith Academy.

