



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THEIR SCHOOLS

The Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church, is the established church of Great Britain, which means that Church and state are legally linked. Two examples of this are that the Queen is its Head, and the Prime Minister has a role in appointing bishops. On a local level, this means that everyone lives in a Church of England parish, and has a parish church, whether they are Christian or not.

The Church of England is divided into 2 provinces – Canterbury and York and each has an Archbishop, with the one in Canterbury being the senior bishop. Each province is then divided into dioceses (pronounced “dio-seas”, and the singular is pronounced “dio-sis”) and each of those has a Diocesan Bishop and often Suffragan Bishops (deputy ones) as well.

We live in the Diocese of St Albans which covers Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and is made up of 334 parishes with 400 churches and 133 church schools. St Albans Abbey is our Cathedral church and is run by the Dean of St Albans. Our Diocesan Bishop, the Right Rev Dr Alan Smith, is based in St Albans, and the 2 Suffragan Bishops are the Bishop of Hertford the Right Rev Michael Beasley (who covers our parish) and the Right Rev Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford.

The Church of England has been involved in education for a very long time, often setting up the first schools in many areas, and is still a major provider of statutory education. 25% of all primary schools are Church of England Schools, and 6.25% of secondary ones.

Church of England schools are established primarily for the communities they are located in. They are inclusive and serve equally those who are of the Christian faith, those of other faiths and those with no faith. They are recognised for their distinctive Christian ethos and the impact this has on standards and all round education. The proportion of Church schools regarded as 'outstanding' (by Ofsted) is much higher than the national norm and yet the Church schools are fully inclusive.

The Church school system is managed and developed through the individual dioceses. Each Diocese has a Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) which is served by a Diocesan Director of Education (DDE). DBEs oversee local developments and support schools on a day to day basis.

Church Schools will have the local priest/vicar automatically on the Governing Body, and also some members who are appointed by the local church council. The land the school is on is owned by the Diocese and as well as being inspected by Ofsted, the school will also have a Diocesan Inspection.

If you have further questions, the Church of England website is very helpful, or do ask Rev Jane Banister.