

Christian Leadership in Schools

An initial review of evidence and current practices
Full Report

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UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER
CENTRE FOR REAL-WORLD LEARNING

⊕ THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
**FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP**

Christian Leadership in Schools: An initial review of evidence and current practices

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About the Church of England's Foundation for Educational Leadership

The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership was founded in 2016 and undertakes leadership development in three workstreams – Programme, Networks and Research, working with a wide range of schools, MATs, Dioceses, local authorities and other systems leaders. Its approach is grounded in the 'Church of England Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' (2016). This document outlines the key purpose of education based on four pillars – Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills; Hope & Aspiration; Community & Living Well Together; Dignity & Respect.

The Foundation aims 'to develop inspirational leaders who are called, connected and committed to deliver the Church of England Vision for Education' and offers professional training for new/aspiring headteachers, MAT CEOs, middle leaders, governors, clergy and Diocese education teams. In addition, it runs the Peer Support Network, which draws together hundreds of school leaders to collaborate on shared leadership development priorities across a wide variety of contexts. Furthermore, it partners in a variety of research projects focused on the connection between school ethos and outcomes in the decision-making of educational leaders.

About the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester

The Centre for Real-World Learning (CRL) focuses on the development of character, building understanding about the learning dispositions that enable individuals to flourish throughout their lives and how best these can be cultivated. CRL has undertaken ground-breaking research for the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Edge Foundation, Creativity, Culture and education, the Mitchell Institute and for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Professor Bill Lucas and Dr Ellen Spencer have recently published two books which are helping teachers understand more about important aspects of character development, *Teaching Creative Thinking: Developing learners who generate ideas and can think critically* and *Developing Tenacity: Teaching learners how to persevere in the face of difficulty*.

Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction.....	7
1. What is Christian leadership in schools?	8
1.1 Leadership at what level?	8
1.2 What is a ‘Christian school’?.....	8
1.3 What do we mean by ‘Christian leaders’?.....	9
1.4 What do we mean by ‘Christian leadership in schools’?.....	12
1.5 Tension: Inclusivity versus truth claims.....	14
1.5.1 Leading with Christian ‘ethos’ or ‘values’	15
1.5.2 Independent Christian schools	16
1.5.3 What sets Church of England schools apart?	18
1.6 Tension: biblical versus secular ‘world view’.....	20
1.6.1 Education as a moral project.....	20
1.6.2 Faith and learning	21
1.6.3 The significance of worldview	21
1.6.4 What is a biblical worldview?	22
1.6.5 Paideia	25
1.6.6 Leading with, and for, a biblical worldview	26
1.7 Tension: Inspection agendas	27
1.8 Models of leadership.....	28
1.8.1 Servant leadership.....	29
1.8.2 Discipling.....	30
1.8.3 Moral leadership (and/or Virtue leadership)	32
1.8.4 Spiritual leadership.....	33
1.8.5 Principled leadership	35

1.8.6	Ethical leadership	36
1.8.7	Effective leadership	36
2.	What does the evidence tell us about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership?	38
2.1	Leadership for what?	38
2.2	Challenges to evaluation	39
2.3	Leadership for flourishing and ‘life in all its fullness’	40
2.4	Leadership for Wisdom, Hope, Community, Dignity	41
2.4.1	Wisdom	42
2.4.2	Hope	47
2.4.3	Community	48
2.4.4	Dignity	50
2.5	School Effectiveness research	53
3.	How strong is the evidence base?	56
3.1	Journals	57
3.2	Strength of the evidence	58
3.2.1	Models of leadership	58
3.2.2	Leadership for flourishing	58
3.2.3	Leadership for wisdom	58
3.2.4	Leadership for hope	58
3.2.5	Leadership for community	58
3.2.6	Leadership for dignity	58
Appendix 1	– Questions and observations arising from the initial review at a glance	59
References	62

Foreword

We were delighted to publish the *‘Church of England Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good’* in Autumn 2016. This vision underpins both the work of the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, and the new SIAMS inspection schedule, which was launched in Autumn 2018. Crucial to the impact of this Vision is the development of a generation of educational leaders who are equipped and inspired to put it into practice in their day-to-day leadership decision-making. Through the delivery of our leadership development programmes and networks, we are committed to grounding our approach in research.

This initial review of evidence about Christian leadership in schools was commissioned from the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester to help us understand more about this important subject.

Specifically, we wanted to establish firm foundations from which the Church of England’s Foundation for Educational Leadership could begin to develop its own research strategy.

The review asks three questions:

- 1. What is Christian leadership in schools?**
- 2. What does the evidence tell us about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership in schools?**
- 3. How strong is the evidence base?**

Ellen Spencer and Bill Lucas have done a great job in offering an overview of such an important and complex area.

I am delighted to share early thinking about Christian leadership in schools in the spirit of encouraging dialogue. While some of the questions and issues raised by the authors clearly have a specific focus for the Church of England and its schools, we hope that many will have a resonance for anyone interested in Christian leadership and will help to stimulate a much wider debate.

This initial review has been written for a broad audience including both researchers and practitioners; we are also publishing a summary report with headteachers and teachers in mind.

The Revd. Nigel Genders

Chief Education Officer

Church of England

Executive Summary

This is an initial review of thinking about Christian leadership in schools. Leadership is one of the most extensively researched of all social processes. It has generated many well-evidenced frameworks and many of these approaches to leadership have become global brands. The subjects of school leadership and Christian leadership have, in recent decades, also generated a considerable amount of research. Christian leadership in schools is a smaller and more recent field of study.

The Church of England's vision for education is laid out in a document of the same name (The Church of England Education Office, 2016). It aims to help school leaders reflect on the theological issues of education. The vision is based on the central claim that God is 'concerned with everything related to education'. In order to develop thinking about the leadership that might be relevant for putting such a vision into practice, this review focuses on some fundamental questions:

- **What is Christian leadership in schools?**
- **What does the evidence tell us about what 'works' in Christian leadership in schools?**
- **How strong is the evidence base?**

In doing so, it raises a number of questions that Christian leaders may wish to ask in order to achieve a rich balance of pedagogical and theological reflection.

What is Christian leadership in schools?

In terms of defining Christian leadership in schools, the usefulness of such an exercise depends upon whether we can be precise with our language. Only then can we consider how ideas might be relevant to both Christian leaders of any school, and leaders leading within schools that have a Christian ethos. The *Vision for Education* offers four broad elements that it suggests all people can connect to: Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills, Educating for Hope and Aspiration, Educating for Community and Living Well Together, and Educating for Dignity and Respect.

There is no single authoritative definition of Christian leadership in schools, because a number of variables are involved and clarity is needed for each of them. Any definition will need to consider what is meant by 'Christian leaders', and also by 'Christian schools'.

This report is written with Christian leaders, and with leaders leading Christian schools in mind, although it aims, in clarifying these issues, to speak to *all* schools in its exploration of leadership for the four elements of the Vision.

Perhaps because of the inevitable tensions between biblical and secular thinking about things like truth claims, or the purpose of education, any consideration of Christian leadership in schools raises more fundamental questions than either the topic of leadership in the abstract or leadership in schools today. For in schools success in leadership is largely defined in terms of academic achievement.

This initial review seeks, therefore, to understand more fundamentally what is meant by Christian leadership in schools, where points of similarity or divergence lie between a Christian understanding of leading for the Church of England's four elements, and how other literature might speak to those areas.

We offer a typology (Figure 1, Page 13) by which the many issues raised in the literature can begin to be examined.

What works in terms of Christian leadership in schools?

There is very little evidence of the effectiveness or otherwise of Christian leadership in schools. For, perhaps unsurprisingly, the effectiveness literature in schools is dominated by standards set by governments and their accountability bodies. It draws primarily on data such as the achievement of pupils in public examinations in determining whether a school 'works'.

While the degree to which an education is moral or the ways in which it develops the character of pupils is certainly acknowledged, and evaluation of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) is present within Ofsted's approach to inspection, the impact of Christian leadership is of course not part of this process. Such summative evaluative data as there are in England can be found in reports from the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), and its new 2018 articulation centres on the impact of vision on outcomes. This new schedule may provide new insight and data into the effectiveness of leadership in relation to a broader range of outcomes.

We suggest a number of questions which would seem to arise from asking the school leadership question with a specifically Christian focus, many of which appear in Appendix 1.

How strong is the evidence base?

The evidence base for Christian leadership in schools is thin, with an inadequate theoretical base, few research-informed models for conceptualising its complexities and almost no robust studies evaluating its impact and/or seeking to understand the mechanisms by which effects are achieved.

Introduction

This initial scan of the literature about Christian leadership in schools involved a preliminary search of relevant academic databases and of grey literature, as well as in depth interviews with a small number of individuals with expertise in the area of Christian leadership in schools.

The research base on leadership, and school leadership, is vast. ‘Christian leadership’ in the context of this review is that which draws on a deeply Christian inspiration (through a range of biblical starting points) in order to promote human flourishing, ‘life in all its fullness’ and the common good. These and other ideas need to be unpacked carefully and many of the concepts in the scope of this study require some introduction, particularly where there is uncertainty or debate over meanings.

The brief for this scan focused on three broad questions:

What is Christian leadership in schools? What does it look like? Who are the main thinkers? How widespread is it in England?

In answering these related questions, we offer an overview of the literature, summarising key lines of thought and identifying key thinkers, key journals and key academic centres.

What do we know about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership?

Here we have considered whether there is evidence that Christian leadership in schools as defined above ‘works’, that is to say whether it

‘delivers’ its intended outcomes such as human flourishing, life in all its fullness and the common good or ‘character’ as defined by the Church of England (Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, 2017).

How strong is the evidence base for Christian school leadership more generally, both theoretically and empirically?

We begin by weighing the evidence base for Christian leadership in schools and then offer some evaluative comments as to its extent, its areas of focus, the quality of existing research, concluding by describing any gaps in our understanding.

This initial review is not in any way exhaustive. Instead it offers an overview of the field with some observations about its scope, both in terms of quantity and quality, identifying along the way well-documented themes and areas where there is little current research.

Where we found something which might merit deeper discussion we have indicated this by a box and an arrow: The review raises many questions and prompts many reflections; for ease of reference we have listed them all in Appendix 1.

1. What is Christian leadership in schools?

'Leadership' is a multifaceted concept. It is 'one of the most comprehensively researched social influence processes in the behavioural sciences' (Parris & Peachey, 2013: 113). To answer this question a number of terms need to be unpacked and a number of further questions need to be asked. Questions include: What level of school leadership are we talking about? What do we mean by 'Christian schools', by 'Christian', and by 'Christian leadership' in general?

1.1 Leadership at what level?

Theory, research and practice into 'leadership' of Church of England schools is multi-level and could incorporate thinking on leadership by governors, headteachers and middle leaders (including subject, teacher, or year group leadership). Or it could refer to aspects of leadership related to Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), or to more abstract concepts such as pedagogic leadership, a holistic approach to aligning leadership values with what is actually taught, or, in some cases, to leadership in schools offered by clergy and chaplains.

1.2 What is a 'Christian school'?

The Church of England's work in the area of Christian leadership is of interest to leaders beyond Church of England schools and some key terms need definition. Firstly, we need to be more explicit about what is meant by a 'Christian school' or else we risk making general statements that are too vague to be useful to any group.

Different groups might consider a school to be 'Christian' in any of the following senses, without necessarily holding to all of them, if it:

- has Christian foundations that have some influence how it is run;
- has a Christian leader;

- is fully staffed by Christians;
- holds to biblical values;
- explicitly teaches Christianity;
- enrolls Christian children (i.e. admits a proportion of its pupils according to faith-criteria, however defined e.g. self-identified, church attendance, membership of church, e.g. through baptism or parental membership).

Historically Church of England schools have provided education 'based on the teachings of the Church of England, with the belief that moral and spiritual education was as important to children as learning skills or a trade.'¹ Today the Church of England's 'church schools' come in a number of types depending upon their governance structure. At the core of the Church of England's values today is this statement: 'Just as we began, educating children to help them flourish regardless of their background or starting point, so we mean to continue as we move forward with

this deeply Christian vision to provide an education that enables 'life in all its fullness' (*ibid.*).

Outside of the Church of England's historic and continuing provision of education through the means of church schools, the term 'Christian school' can also tend more specifically to refer to:

a place where Christian educators refuse to be satisfied with providing only factual knowledge and marketable skills. Rather, teachers in a Christian school seek to transform all activities and studies into an expression of Biblical wisdom, training the students to walk as disciples of Jesus Christ.

(Van Dyk 1985: 75)

In discussing the concept of 'Christian leadership of schools' it is important to be mindful of the impact that differences, however subtle, in such schools' *raison d'être*, may have on the priorities, processes, and practices of leadership.

1.3 What do we mean by 'Christian leaders'?

In 2006 *Christianity Today International* commissioned a survey of self-identified US 'Christians' to understand 'the disparity of those who call themselves Christian in America'. Although not extrapolated directly to leadership in the study and clearly undertaken in a different country, their findings reported in *CT Pastors* (Lee, 2007) provide a useful framework to help us identify what we might mean by and who we might include in the label 'Christian leaders'. The journal identified five roughly equally divided segments as:

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies#na>

ACTIVE - *'most likely to have a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that affects their beliefs and inspires active church life'*

- Believe salvation comes through Jesus Christ;
- Committed churchgoers;
- Bible readers;
- Accept leadership positions;
- Invest in personal faith development through the church;
- Feel obliged to share faith.

PROFESSING

- Believe salvation comes through Jesus Christ;
- Focus on personal relationship with God and Jesus;
- Similar beliefs to Active Christians, different actions;
- Less involved in church, both attending and serving;
- Less commitment to Bible reading or sharing faith.

While this list has a US context, its categories may be helpful to us in England.

Another important distinction amongst Anglicans is between Anglo-catholic², broad church, and evangelical³ (Village & Francis, 2010). The Church of England is a broad organisation and one of its hallmarks is its

LITURGICAL

- Regular churchgoers
- High level of spiritual activity, mostly expressed by serving in church and/or community
- Recognize authority of church.

PRIVATE

- Largest and youngest segment;
- Believe in God and doing good things;
- Own a bible but don't read it;
- Spiritual interest, but not within church context;
- Only about a third attend church at all;
- Almost none are church leaders.

CULTURAL - *'least likely to align their beliefs or practices with biblical teachings, or attend church'*

- Little outward religious behaviour or attitudes;
- Aware of God, but little personal involvement with God;
- Do not view Jesus as essential to salvation;
- Affirm many ways to God;
- Favour universality theology.

tolerance of tradition such that those Anglicans emphasising Catholic tradition and those emphasising Reformed tradition can coexist.

² Anglo-Catholics emphasise liturgical worship and see the celebration of the Eucharist as central. They tend to espouse a Roman Catholic view of doctrine and view church tradition as an important source of authority

³ Term used to describe those who hold exclusively to the inspiration and authority of scripture in matters of doctrine. Evangelicals also believe firmly in personal conversion and evangelism.

This difference provides further complexity however, in defining terms like Christian leader and Christian leadership. Fundamental beliefs about, for example, the inerrancy or otherwise of scripture, are important to recognise when talking about *who* is leading, and *what for*.

Village and Francis's empirical study into almost 6,000 ordained and lay Anglicans found that the divide between traditions is increasing among younger generations mainly because those in Anglo-Catholic and broad-church traditions are becoming more liberal on theological or moral matters, whereas evangelical Christians tend to maintain traditional conservative views of theology and morality while becoming less traditional in ecclesiastical matters. (p. 59).

They found that there is 'no simple liberal versus conservative divide between Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals because this distinction depends on the type of issue in question' (p. 77). From an evangelical perspective, conservatism is about:

...theological traditionalism and moral conservatism. They hold to orthodox beliefs about the Christian faith (such as the

existence of God, the resurrection of Jesus and the reality of heaven) and traditional beliefs about the nature of Scripture and its interpretation... For Anglo-Catholics, conservatism is about retaining patterns and practice of church life, but not necessarily traditional beliefs or patterns of moral behaviour. Along with many in the broad church, they have been more willing than evangelicals to embrace changes in orthodox belief, biblical interpretation and moral behaviour.

(Village & Francis 2010: 77)

These distinctions, which at their core 'may relate to profound differences in the understanding of the relations of Scripture to faith' (p. 78) will undoubtedly be reflected in beliefs, purposes, and practice of Christian leaders in schools.

With more liberal interpretations of the Bible, 'The purpose of religion', according to one sociologist 'is no longer to praise God: it is to help find peace of mind and personal satisfaction' (Bruce cited by Morris, 2011: 267, in Ecclesiastical Law Society article: *The Future of 'High' Establishment*). While the 'proper place of religion in public life' has always been debated, it is likely to be an issue for many Christian leaders in schools.

1.4 What do we mean by 'Christian leadership in schools'?

In unpacking Christian leadership in schools we need to be mindful of the fact that, while Christian leadership may not be exclusive to Christian schools, it may look quite different depending on the school context. While the absence of prescribed religion does not make a school neutral in its values or its beliefs, we include 'secular' schools here as places that may nevertheless possess a Christian presence by virtue of Christian staff. Other faith-based schools are considered out of scope for this review.

By 'Christian leadership in schools' there are a number of possible meanings including:

- Leadership by active Christians leading active Christian staff – most likely in an independent Christian school
- Leadership by active Christians in Christian schools
- Leadership by active, or by professing Christians in all schools
- Leadership by non-Christian leaders at various (non-headship) levels in Christian schools
- Leadership in all schools where there is some 'Christian' element such as aspects of its ethos that claim, or contain, biblical values
- Leadership by all leaders who claim to bring some 'Christian' element, such as an aspect of their personal values that they relate to biblical teaching.

It may be helpful to situate these on a matrix to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of this way of looking at it. Figure 1 on Page 13 is an attempt to do this.

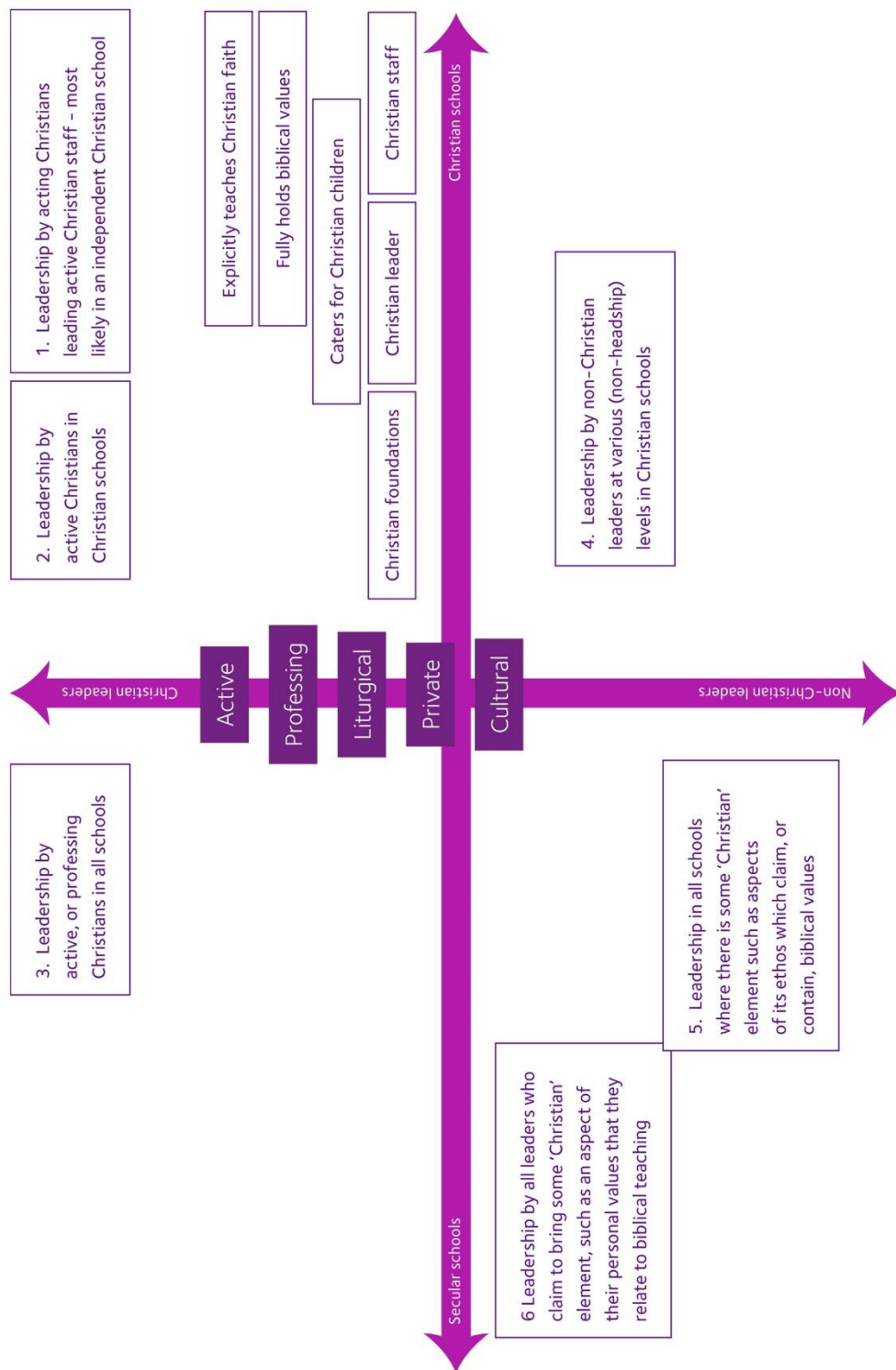


Figure 1 Centre for Real-World Learning's Framework of types of Christian leadership in schools

This brief overview of the broad literature focuses largely on point 2, and particularly on Church of England schools. While recognising that headteachers in Church of England schools differ in their approaches to their own faith, they will likely find themselves leading mixed teams: some of their leadership teams will be Christian; other leaders may be at different stages of their faith journey and some may not have a Christian faith. Point 2 speaks to the way headteachers lead all these situations.

Point 1 is the most overtly Christian position. There is much literature in this area, and its focus on worldview and biblical truth is important in guiding this review.

Point 3 is less directly relevant for Church of England schools, although some of the literature on leading for particular values may be useful, and those leaders in this position may find this work relevant to them.

Point 4 is less relevant, and simply recognises that there is a category of non-head leader in Christian schools. The Christian leadership element comes from point 2 in these cases.

This overview will speak mainly to Points 5 and Point 6 in recognition of the fact that the

Church of England *Vision for Education* (2016) embraces education in general, not just in Church of England schools. The biblical concept of 'common grace', for example, suggests that Christians can be a radical blessing to others without compromising on truth (in fact, because of not compromising on truth). The Church of England Vision states 'In other schools which are not rooted in an explicit Christian ethos, our vision for education can still be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that can inspire what the school is and does.' (2016: 2).

For the purposes of this review, however, the higher up the preceding list, the more clearly the literature is likely to have relevance for the issue (or perhaps by its absence speak to what is yet unknown). Literature that addresses any of the other points is included where found but has not actively been sought out. Literature of interest is not restricted to England, although differences in the context will limit the direct relevance of some of the scholarly literature relating to Christian schools overseas. Where there is literature that specifically references Anglican church schools, this is of particular interest.

1.5 Tension: Inclusivity versus truth claims

Church of England schools are places of education that serve children of any and no religion. Lord Dearing's (2001) report to the Archbishop's Council *The Way Ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium* noted that the Church should seek to serve all children; that Church schools 'stand well in the regard of many parents of all faiths and no faith' (p. 17); that Church schools have much 'to offer to children of all faiths and none' (p.

5); and that its HEIs are indeed 'welcoming members of all faiths and none' (p. 67).

Church schools (and colleges) are, nonetheless, 'Christian institutions which offer a Christian influence to all staff and students' (p. 67) and have '...a well-grounded basis for [their] values and moral standards' that those they serve are looking for. The report recommended that 'Church schools must be distinctively Christian' (p. xi).

The writing group developing the Church of England's *Vision for Education* moved from using the language of a 'distinctively Christian' ethos to focusing on a 'deeply Christian vision of education' that centralises the notion of 'human flourishing for all', based on John 10:10. This sets excellence and academic rigour in a 'wider framework': one that allows children and their teachers to 'pursue the big questions of meaning' (2016: 4), and seeks to speak to all schools, whether Church of England or not.

Jesus promise of 'life in all its fullness' is recorded in the Gospel of John in the context of Jesus talking about his identity as the 'good shepherd' who is the only way to know God the father, with whom he claims to be one: "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30).

Talking to the Pharisees of his followers, and those who were yet to come and follow him:

Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

(John 10:7-11)

The Church of England aims to balance itself within a system of 'religious plurality' where there can be 'ongoing negotiation in which the diversity of voices is taken seriously'. A lesson learned over its long history is that [to retain its broad influence] the Church of England must find a way forward where 'we can be true to the depths of our faith and others can be similarly true to their deep commitments' (The Church of England Education Office, 2016: 5)

→ How might the Church of England find a coherent philosophical / theological balance between its emphasis on flourishing for all, and the radical and exclusive truth claims of Jesus about his identity as God, and as the only way to know God the Father?

1.5.1 Leading with Christian 'ethos' or 'values'

The separation of Christian ethos or values from a biblical framework creates a definitional challenge in any attempt to work out what good leadership practice, or its outcomes might look like.

Many schools without a Christian affiliation adopt an ethos whose underpinning values they may or may not recognise as Christian but which may be Christian in origin. Schools

may be led by those who wish to steer very clear of so-called Christian values, adopting a more humanist stance. Yet many values that are seen as signs of cultural progress and even taken for granted in society today (e.g. an elevation of the status of women and their equal status, loving our enemies) were, arguably, radically Christian at the birth of Christianity.

As Pearcey says 'From the beginning, [Christianity] has stood *against* the traditions of the day.' (Pearcey, 2018: 70). In the 18th Century, England saw a profound period of

moral decline following religious wars of the 17th Century as lived Christianity was on the wane. The impact of abolitionist and societal reformer William Wilberforce and fellow Christians (including John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and Joshua Watson) cannot possibly be overstated in instilling in wider society ‘that infinitely transformative engine we call a social conscience’ (Metaxes, 2007: 209). Biographer Eric Metaxes explains, ‘We had suddenly entered a world in which we [in the West] would never again ask whether it was our responsibility as a society to help the poor and the suffering. We would only quibble about how...’ (p. 160).

Arguing from a conservative evangelical position Albert Mohler suggests that Christian values cannot save anyone and never will do, for the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a Christian value. A comfortability with Christian values, he suggests, can blind us to a need for the gospel (Mohler, 2011).

This is to say that although we exist in a culture profoundly influenced by Judeo-Christian thinking, the values themselves do not make the culture Christian in such a way that might enable us to develop clarity of thinking about what Christian leadership is, and how it can be exercised.

→ **How can Church of England schools retain their inclusivity but yet hold truth at the core that people want to be a part of? How can the Church of England fulfil its mission and vision for education in a way that retains biblical integrity?**

1.5.2 Independent Christian schools

There is a body of literature about independent Christian education that might have much to contribute to the Church of England’s thinking about issues like worldview, or integration of theology, biblical values, and classroom teaching, or the inculcation of particular values in children, or the bringing about of particular desired outcomes of schooling. Richard Edlin’s seminal text *The Cause of Christian Education* (2014) covers issues such as the foundations for curriculum in a Christian school, the role of teacher professional development, and the key role of Christian teachers in public (US equivalent of ‘state’) schools.

Leslie Francis and colleagues (Francis, ap Siôn, & Village, 2014) in the *Journal of Research on*

Christian Education looked at the background to the Independent Christian School movement in England and Wales, which developed ‘in response to a perceived secularization that was impacting the whole of the state-maintained sector of education, including church schools’ (p. 32). Citing work by Wolford, they explain the underpinning theological and ideological motivation in terms of a

...biblically-based evangelical Christianity that seeks to relate the message of the Bible to all aspects of present day life whether personal, spiritual or educational.

(Francis, ap Siôn & Village 2014: 32)

The purposes of schools within this movement can be identified as:

- quality of education;
- Christian and moral nurture;
- quality of relationships;
- preparation for life.

There may be some resonance with the Church of England's vision of Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills; Hope and Aspiration; Community and Living Well Together; and Dignity and Respect.

In terms of empirically demonstrated outcomes of schooling with these aims, Francis et al.'s own comparative study compared responses of 271 13-15 year old pupils from 11 independent Christian schools with 20,348 pupils from 93 schools without a religious foundation. Attendance at an independent Christian school was associated with a number of outcomes: 'higher self-esteem, greater rejection of drug use, lower endorsing of illegal behaviours, lower racism, higher levels of conservative Christian belief, and more conservative views on sexual morality...' (p. 30).

For independent Christian schools there is a mission-practice 'gap' and leaders and teachers need help turning the former into the latter. A 2011 study by Boerema involved email and telephone surveys with school leaders and others (including university professors and education coordinators)

associated with two Christian school organisations: Association of Christian Schools International (based in Colorado, US, supporting over 3,500 Christian schools worldwide), and Christian Schools International (based in Michigan, US, supporting member schools in the US and Canada), to find out where Christian schools needed research support.

Responses indicate that the area of most interest to practitioners 'was that of the gap between Christian school mission and its practice'. Indeed, a number of academic studies' (p. 41) cited by Boerema explored this mission-practice gap. For example, in terms of what makes the Christian schools distinctive, observations from one study 'did not support a distinctive integration of faith and learning in the Christian school curriculum' (p. 41); another, studying 13 Christian high schools in Canada 'concluded that, on the whole, there was nothing distinctively Christian about these schools in terms of their curricular design, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, organizational structure, or the lifestyle of its students' (p. 41).

Boerema's study provides some thoughts on why Christian schools can look so similar to their secular counterparts. He finds answers in the literature on 'organizations and the economics of production'. Organisation studies and the scientific management literature explain why organisations tend to adopt the same form and structure, and how professionalisation contributes to this.

→ **How might we think about developing processes and practices of professionalisation of teachers and leaders that are first and foremost about values?**

Boerema draws attention to Hull's distinction between 'Christian education' and 'Christian educating'. The former recognises that Christian and secular humanistic worldviews are at odds, and 'rejects the whole matrix of

scientific and humanistic ideals that currently vie to define the purpose of the public school' (p. 41). The latter represents what we might

call a 'secular-plus' approach with a 'status quo frame of reference, [where] the distinguishing character of the Christian

school revolves around what teachers 'add' to the pupils' educational experience by means of moral integrity, devotional piety, and biblical insights into a select group of controversial topics.' (p. 41).

1.5.3 What sets Church of England schools apart?

Helen Jelfs's (2013) paper in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education* explores empirically the distinctiveness of Church of England schools and what sets them apart. She looks through Benne's analytical framework of 'vision, ethos and people who carry the vision and ethos' (p. 73). The paper discusses the 'Key elements of church school leadership' (p. 69) which are

...a commitment to Christian values, a focus on interpersonal relationships, promoting links with the church and local community, personal Christian commitment and professional leadership. Many staff were not only motivated by a love of working with children and young people, but also committed to the rationale and purpose of the school. They believed their Christian commitment influenced how they went about their work, while acknowledging that although some of their colleagues did not have a Christian commitment, they were nevertheless committed to supporting the school. Some staff indicated that an advantage of working in a Christian school was the possibility of being overt about their faith and not having to separate the spiritual from their work. Staff spoke of being supported both professionally and personally, and the presence of a team atmosphere and collaborative approach.

(Jelfs 2013: 69)

Her earlier article (2010) for *Journal of Beliefs & Values* found a need for further work informing Church of England schools 'about how Christian distinctiveness relates to teaching, learning and the curriculum' (p. 29).

In the same way, Jelfs (2013) tells us that although 'school leaders and staff [in Church of England schools] are committed to the Christian faith and seek to establish an ethos informed by Christian beliefs and practices, they are less able to articulate a distinctive philosophy of education particularly with respect to teaching, learning and the curriculum' (p. 52). She tells us that 'the relationship between the Anglican tradition and its schools is a relatively undeveloped area of research in England' (p. 52).

As Jelfs says: 'In view of the ongoing contested role of religious based schools within a publicly funded education system, critical reflection on what Christian distinctiveness is and what it means to be a Church of England school today remains an essential task.'

Jelfs discusses the distinction between individual faith, seen as 'a few simple affirmations' (p. 71), and actually considering how these are brought to bear on beliefs about the purpose of 'educational beliefs and practices' (ibid.). We might call this 'worldview'. She points to the issue thus:

This [lack of awareness among leaders] is exacerbated by the fact that teachers have in the main been trained in non-religious colleges and universities and "few educated in their religious tradition beyond a Sunday school version of the faith" (Benne, 2001: 28)

The result of this is that “very few [are] able to integrate their faith and learning on the basis of a more sophisticated conversation of the two”

(Jelfs 2013: 71)

Here again:

The failure to articulate an adequate philosophy of education reflects a dualistic view of life—a split between the secular = sacred, fact = value, public = private, theory = praxis. As a result, Christianity tends to end up as “an affair of the heart, not the mind” (Benne, 2001, p. 142) and because it has not been given any intellectual content it is unable to engage with secular learning.

(Jelfs 2013: 72)

The far-ranging implications of this dualistic worldview is the topic of Nancy Pearcey's (2018) book drawing on thinking that stems from Descartes's 'attempt to render a mechanistic worldview compatible with church teaching' (p. 50) which infiltrates so much of secular orthodoxy. Pearcey argues: 'To have independent minds, we must learn where these theories come from and then propose a Christian worldview as a viable alternative' (p. 134). She says 'even those who identify as Christian can get taken in by a secular worldview. Too often, they fail to recognize it because they know Christianity only as a spiritual experience, not as an alternative worldview' (p. 108).

Worldview is a 'lens through which we view all of life - the human person, history, nature, and society' (p. 108). If we take a dualistic view of life, (splitting the 'secular/sacred; fact/value; public/private; theory/praxis' p. 71) then 'the human being is 'split asunder'

(Pearcey; p. 51). Christian schools end up with Christianity as an 'add-on' or an 'atmosphere' (Jelfs, 2013: 71) because a Christian worldview cannot be reconciled with the prevailing orthodoxy of Cartesian dualism. Christian school leaders must take issues of worldview seriously, argues Jelfs, and must 'clarify the implications for pedagogical practice' (p. 72). As Jelfs makes her discussion she cites others (Bottery, Blomberg, Eade) who recognise that education is never neutral, and that a dualistic view of life profoundly influences pedagogy.

Jelfs' summary offers a very clear direction for where Church of England leadership efforts might be directed. Her study revealed a significant 'gap' in thinking about undergirding practice with a clear philosophy of education; what we might call 'worldview':

In summary, there was little evidence of the depth of thought required to provide the necessary theological or philosophy basis for a sustained educational endeavour. There was also little evidence to suggest that Church schools were engaged in a critique of the ideological commitments of the dominant educational agenda, or attempting to develop a more distinctive philosophy of education informed by the Christian faith tradition. Thus a more explicit philosophy of education is required to underpin the educational practice of Church schools today. Without such a perspective Church schools lack a sure foundation in the face of the contemporary educational and socio-cultural context, and lay themselves open to the possibility of compromising their distinctive Christian character.

(Jelfs 2013: 72-73)

1.6 Tension: biblical versus secular 'world view'

In thinking about developing a body of knowledge on Christian leadership, it will be important to recognise the underpinning influence of one's philosophy of Christian education, or theology of education. It may not be feasible to develop a coherent position on Christian leadership without articulating this.

→ **There may be more than one viewpoint on a philosophy of Christian education and it may help if these are brought to light if the term 'Christian leadership' is to be given real meaning. How might this be currently understood in schools?**

1.6.1 Education as a moral project

Education is a moral activity (Claxton & Lucas, 2013). Schools are moral enterprises, whether they recognise this or not. The Church of England publication *The Fruit of the Spirit*, (2015: 3) notes that:

There is no such thing as neutral education. As soon as we begin to teach something to someone else, we are inevitably making value judgements about what we are teaching, how we are teaching it and why we are teaching it. Any decision we make about what or how to teach contains within it an implicit understanding of the human condition, of what is important in life, of the relationships we want to foster, and of what is worth learning, knowing or questioning.

(Church of England Education Office 2015: 3)

In looking at this area, a helpful term is that of 'worldview'. Pearcey tells us that 'In every decision we make, we are not just deciding

what we want to do. We are expressing our view of the purpose of human life.' (p. 10). According to Pearcey, an education that excludes God cannot be a neutral education. A biblical view of the purpose of human life is quite different from a secular view. For example, the dignity and value of all human life cannot be taken for granted under a secular worldview that denies there is a stable universal human nature, created by God. Where the purpose of nature is denied and reduced to blind chance, so morality cannot be informed by it (Pearcey, 2018: 206).

By definition the word 'secular' can be understood by what it is not: 'not connected with religious or spiritual matters'. Yet it is more than this because secularism is not value-free. Because of the 'widespread misunderstanding of the worldview of secularism' (Edlin, 2014: 31), the 'initiation of children into a belief-based understanding of the world... often occurs covertly more than it does overtly'.

The Church of England's *Vision for Education* recognises the biblical mandate for educating our children. It recognises the inherent worth of education as a wonderful privilege and the duty that we have to educate the next generation about the world God has made. The Church of England's historic position – 'a complex and generous model' (Church of England Education Office 2016: 4) – is an approach that allows for a variety of views and helps it to sit relatively comfortably in a position of positive influence within a country of diverse population.

→ **To adopt both a rigorous and useful approach to research it will be important to delve deeply and consider the philosophies that underpin thinking about purposes and practices of Christian leadership**

Stakeholders to this current initial evidence review raised a range of questions, but a common view was a need to focus on pedagogy and purpose. A common theme was the need for theological literacy; not just literacy, but the integrity that comes about from having a coherent approach to school leadership: Examples of questions from stakeholders included:

- What is theological literacy?
- What are the distinctive elements of Christian leadership in church schools?
- What do we mean by theological vision?
- What is the added value of the faith/Christian dimension of a MAT?
- What does it mean for a headteacher to think in a theological way?

1.6.2 Faith and learning

The integration of faith and learning has been discussed at length in the literature. Lawrence et al. (2005: 18) tell us that it has been the subject of ‘dozens, perhaps hundreds, of books and journal articles during recent decades’. Other terms for it are ‘thinking Christianly, having a Christian worldview’ etc. What has received ‘little attention’ are the questions:

Is integration really occurring as part of the student’s learning process? Is the integration of faith and learning something that teachers do or something that students do?

(Lawrence 2005: 18)

The authors suggest that what is really needed, if we are to make the debates of

practical (rather than purely academic) value, we need to conduct research at pupil perception level, where the learning is happening:

If we’re really interested in integration of faith and learning, then we need to understand what students believe is happening, as well as discuss and expand our grasp of the learning process. This requires an understanding and application of appropriate learning theories as well as insight into students’ perceptions of what they are experiencing and how (or if) they are processing academic content with a growing faith.

(Lawrence 2005: 18)

→ **How might the Church of England develop an approach to pedagogy that explores the integration of faith and learning across the full range of a school’s teaching?**

1.6.3 The significance of worldview

Worldview is ‘a conceptual framework of our view of the world, a belief that guides individual behaviour’ (Esqueda 2014: 93). Citing others, Esqueda argues that a biblical worldview ‘is essential for complete understanding and living according to the Christian faith’ (p. 93). He argues that ‘The foundation for a Christian worldview is not merely an idea, but the existence and character of the triune God’ (p. 95). Writing about Christian faculty in higher education institutions, Esqueda argues that because of the role of all education institutions in ‘conveying their values and ideas to their pupils, and consequently guid[ing] their behaviour’, worldview is a particularly important concept for such institutions.

Christian thinkers have come to recognise the clash of worldviews between Christianity and secularism. Examples of thinkers writing about this issue include Carl Trueman, Tim Challies, Albert Mohler, Douglas Wilson, The Gospel Coalition, Denny Burk, Randy Alcorn, Ryan Anderson, Nancy Pearcey, and Rosaria Butterfield.

Pearcey categorises modern philosophy into two conflicting traditions: modernism, stemming from the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, and treating ‘facts’ as the primary reality (empiricism, rationalism, materialism, naturalism, for example), and postmodernism, stemming from the ‘Romantic’ reaction to the Enlightenment, and treating the mind as the ultimate source of reality and authority. Thinkers in this tradition focused on ‘values’, like justice, morals, freedom, meaning (idealism, Marxism, existentialism, postmodernism). Tracing her way through philosophers from eighteenth-century extreme empiricist Hume, and idealist Kant, to nineteenth-century pantheist Hegel, who paved the way for Darwinian views on evolution, she argues that:

Secular thought today assumes a body/person split, with the body defined in the “fact” realm by empirical science... and the person defined in the “values” realm as the basis for rights... this dualism has created a fractured, fragmented view of the human being, in which the body is treated as separate from the authentic self.

(Pearcey 2018: 13)

There are many implications for how this plays out in terms of ethics. And a modernist view of nature, whereby morality is untethered from nature to become simply a social construction, leads inevitably, she

argues (p. 161) to a postmodern view of morality.

Pearcey writes that ‘If nature does not reveal *God’s* will, then it is a morally neutral realm where humans may impose *their* will... And because the human body is part of nature, it too is demoted to the level of an amoral mechanism...’ (p. 22). This is to say that in a worldview that takes God out of the equation, the goal of knowledge is no longer to fulfil God’s design and purpose, but to serve individual human needs and purposes.

1.6.4 What is a biblical worldview?

A biblical or Christian worldview acknowledges ‘essential meanings of the faith, as summarized in such forms as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed’ (Grauf-Grounds et al. 2009: 3). The Church of England recognises these two creeds as important statements of ‘what the whole Church believes about the great doctrines of the Christian faith’⁴. These essential meanings centre on the eternal creator God, the ‘maker of heaven and earth’ (Nicene Creed) whose design and purposes guide our pursuit of knowledge and moral decisions.

In terms of scholarly thinking on the issue, a number of the hits returned from a search for the term via database *Education Source* are book reviews. For example, the journal *Christian Higher Education* has published a couple of pieces that speak to the issue of biblical worldview in education. Grauf-Grounds et al. (2009) relates to the formation of Christian therapists in Christian higher education in the US. In it, the authors helpfully explain how worldview is at the centre of each theory or model.

⁴ Both summaries of the Christian faith are available via: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/apostles-creed#na>

Although the example they speak of is outside of school education, they discuss how a professional has to learn to understand the underlying assumptions when evaluating which approaches to use in a particular context.

They write: 'Training programs within Christian institutions will benefit from intentionally developing a curriculum that attends to a broadly Christian worldview as well as to the content of a particular academic profession' (p. 14). The piece speaks more to training of educators themselves than to young people, given its situation in the higher education literature.

Another *Christian Higher Education* piece from a US perspective is an article by Kanitz, *Improving Christian Worldview Pedagogy* (2005). The author recognises the difficulty faculty have in integrating faith and learning, and in knowing whether they have succeeded. In addressing the problem of helping pupils develop a Christian worldview, Kanitz argues for the importance of considering 'our denominational and institutional histories' so that interpretation of biblical principles, and thereby their integration into subject matter, is not overlooked:

In short, making Christian worldview pedagogy more effective requires that we consider not only shared tenets of mere Christianity, but also our denominational and institutional differences, and the culture currents influencing our students.

(Kanitz 2005: 100)

Kanitz makes a point about the assumption that 'there is "the" Christian worldview' agreed on by all Christians everywhere. While there are fundamental tenets of Christianity that are shared by all Christians and 'most of the scholarly work on Christian worldview focuses on this common ground...' (p. 100)

this is not to say that all Christians hold to the same views on pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, the kingdom of God etc (i.e. the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church). Kanitz cites *Creation Regained: Biblical basis for a Reformational worldview* by Albert Wolters (1985), which she commends for recognising difference within mainstream orthodoxy.

This emphasis on theological difference risks being overstated, however, because Christians agree about more than they disagree on when it comes to how Christians think regarding such issues as the origin and value of life, and the meaning of a 'good' life. The overarching narrative of the Bible as reflected in the Apostles Creed – a creator God creating a perfect world, the arrival of sin, redemption through Jesus, and ultimately a restoration to God's perfect plan through a new creation – is inevitably at odds with a secular worldview.

Wolters's book formulates an integrated Christian worldview that should be relatable to all Christians concerned with worldview. Kanitz's advice is not that the worldview concept is problematic, but asks:

Does this mean we can derive no common understanding of basic biblical principles, or that we should not make such demands of students? No. But what it does mean is that we must acknowledge that students read the text differently, that our denominations and institutions have histories of reading the text differently, and that the faculty members at the same university or college read the text differently. We must, therefore, consider these facts when presenting material from a Christian worldview and when encouraging our students to think Christianly about a subject. If we do so, we will be far more successful in anticipating possible objections and stumbling blocks for students when we tell them to integrate the subject matter with what we call biblical principles. Assignments

...need to be designed that unearth how our students are reading the Bible and that engage them in a healthy, critical examination of the influences shaping their interpretation of scripture and their Christian worldview.

(Kanitz 2005: 103)

We found two relevant pieces on this topic – both book reviews – in peer reviewed *The Journal of Youth Ministry*. There also seems to be a preponderance of pieces written from a higher education perspective, and from the US.

Mueller's book *Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture: Bridging teen worldview and Christian truth* is reviewed by Lemuel Usita in *The Journal of Youth Ministry* (2007). The book is directed at those who parent, pastor, and minister to today's youth (albeit the youth of Mueller's book are now young adults), contrasting a biblical worldview with the dominant postmodern narrative. Its argument is that those leading young people must understand the culture in which young people are growing up, but also 'know the Truth, and present them with the Truth' (p. 169, cited on p. 114). Mueller uses the example of Paul, whose ministry on Mars Hill (Acts 17.22-31) demonstrated his understanding of, and ability to engage with, Athenian culture to present the gospel to great effect.

Steven Bonner in the same journal reviews Goheen and Bartholomew's 2008 *Living at the Crossroads: An introduction to Christian worldview*. This is an introductory text to the worldview concept, recognising the contemporary influences of postmodernism, globalization, and consumerism. The book explores what Christian witness might look like in particular areas of life, such as business, politics, creativity, and education.

Bonner argues that recognition of worldview is important:

Being able to identify my culturally shaped lenses as well as critically and biblically think through the implications of being at a unique crossroads in our history is a task we must all engage in.

(Bonner 2011: 127)

Mullins's review of Werther and Linville's 2012 edited volume *Philosophy of the Christian Worldview: Analysis, assessment and development* in *Themelios* highlights the frustrations of trying to get to the truth in any academic study:

There are days when I doubt my decision to study theology. Some of the current fashion trends in contemporary theology can often be disheartening to a young philosophical theologian. When one tries to rigorously explore one's faith, certain contemporary theologians throw down the most unfortunate and unnecessary roadblocks to intellectual inquiry. In some theological circles it is hard to have a conversation without hearing the phrase, 'All language is metaphor'. At times it can be difficult to ask hard questions about one's faith without being told that Christian faith involves ineffable mysteries that ought not to be pried into. These types of roadblocks to intellectual inquiry can be frustrating for those who have a faith that seeks understanding... This book reminded me of why I originally wanted to study theology.

(Mullins 2013: 152)

The book brings together a selection of contributions from a range of authors 'to offer a careful analysis and development of the Christian worldview...' (p. 153).

At a time where corporate worship is still expected by the government but rarely practised, biblical literacy among the general

population is at an all-time low (Field, 2014). Behind us are the days when bible stories were familiar and young people would possess a knowledge of them as a foundation, however tucked away, to come to light at some point in adulthood.

But standalone bible stories are, arguably, not enough. If schools are *truly* to embrace 'the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people' (Church of England Education Office, 2016) they will need to consider how they nourish biblical literacy as well as being able to 'offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework' of 'life in all its fullness'.

In contrast to Catholic schools, which hold to 'values, knowledge, and belief which are absolute and declared from the centre' (Johnson, 2000: 130), the Church of England 'does not have such a centralized decision-making mechanism.' (p. 131).

Christian leaders recognising the weight of the disjunction between a secular and a biblical worldview may wish to consider their role in communicating what they understand to be the truth to children in their care. This might include developing theological and biblical literacy, and the ability to recognise and question worldviews.

1.6.5 Paideia

The concept of *paideia* occurred in a number of places in this initial literature scan. For Van der Walt and Zecha, *paideia* refers to 'well-rounded educatedness' (Van der Walt & Zecha, 2004: 178).

Peter Hodgson's *God's Wisdom: Towards a theology of education* (1999) discusses theology and education, attempting to fuse the two together through the concept of *paideia*, which he understands by reference to Ephesians 6:4 ("Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"). Reviewer of the book, Long (2000), articulates Hodgson's main argument as the idea that a 'single nurturing process, ultimately traceable to God, is involved in education and this is why a theology of education shares the very same nurturing aim as education itself' (p. 132).

Long's review of this book makes the critical observation that 'the hypothesis that Theology and Education might have a common bond is interesting, but tricky to defend in the light of secularist discourse in education' (2000; 131). Secularism does not, she argues, hold the same nurturing aims.

She further draws on Buber, recognising

...that from a theological point of view, education is not simply about nurturing the 'native powers of the child' but rather about delving deeper into the very source of that creativity. I take from this the thought that it is the mark of creativity in the child that needs to be opened up through theological insight. The child's creativity thus reflects its own createdness.

(Long 2000: 132)

There is much in Long's insightful review that is worth comprehending and points to deeper levels of philosophical argument that it will be important to dissect and build upon.

From a Higher Education perspective, Esqueda (2014) lays out an argument where

...a biblical worldview is presented as the unifying factor for the fusion of faith and learning. The biblical narrative provides a

solid foundation for a comprehensive worldview, offering implications for the Christian faith and Christian higher education.

(Esqueda 2014: 91)

He suggests that the very idea of faith and learning being a primary distinctive of Christian higher education 'conveys a false dichotomy'; a call for integration of the two 'suggests that the Christian faith and learning belong to different areas of knowledge and practice' (p. 91).

1.6.6 Leading with, and for, a biblical worldview

The Church of England *Vision for Education* is for all schools, not just church schools. It is for Christian leaders of all schools and its ideas are intended to be inclusive of all leaders of all schools. Nevertheless, Christian leaders have certain beliefs that cannot be distilled into a set of values alone. For many, those values are based on biblical truth claims, and are brought to bear on their understanding – to some degree – of all areas of leadership, study, and education. Leading with biblical worldview in mind – as well as *for* a biblical worldview forms part of the body of literature on Christian leadership in schools.

Writing in a piece in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, Schultz and Swezey (2013: 227) tell us that a 'Biblical definition of worldview is a challenge since Scripture does not use the term, but various writers have defined the term with language that is biblically relevant.' They use a three-dimensional conception of worldview derived from Sire's 2004 definition. Their research is US-based, and in this context worldview, they argue, 'has become increasingly prevalent in Christian school education during the past

two decades'. Notably, they observe that 'Within that same period, educators with various worldviews are increasingly looking for measurable results to help them evaluate the effectiveness of their educational endeavours. But in too many instances the embracing of worldview is merely a token effort.' (p. 227). They cite Barna (2003) who 'asserted that while everyone possesses a worldview, "relatively few have a coherent worldview or are able to articulate it clearly"' (p. xviii). This lack of coherence persists because 'most people don't consider their worldview to be a central, defining element of their life, although it is' (p. 229).

Depending upon the type of school they are leading, Christian leaders of any school will have differing ideas about the value of overt teaching of worldview. For many Christian leaders, Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' involves biblical beliefs, which they will wish to teach pupils. For other Christian leaders, worldview may not been something they have considered in depth. Both types of leader, and those in-between, may see the value in teaching pupils what a biblical worldview is, or at least recognising worldview in their own teaching. It can help pupils to develop a coherent perspective of their own, to discern worldview in statements made by others, and think critically about the beliefs behind an assertion in any given subject area.

In terms of how much we know about the effectiveness of efforts to instil worldview in pupils, Schultz and Swezey tell us that few studies evaluate the effectiveness of school efforts to develop a comprehensive biblical worldview in their students (Schultz and Swezey, 2013).

→ **To what extent is Christian leadership about ensuring certain values are foregrounded in school life?**

1.7 Tension: Inspection agendas

There is recognition in the academic literature of the tension of a dual inspection regime for Church schools (Ofsted and SIAMS). Lumb's (2014) 'Bernsteinian analysis of the school's learning environment' looks at the support school leaders need to tackle this tension. Her approach is a year-long ethnographic study at a single primary school. She highlights how 'there is an expectation that... doctrine will be opened up and explored within the curriculum' (p. 43) although we did not uncover literature that looked at how this is done.

Lumb highlights 'a need for church school leaders to be provided with opportunities to develop a reflective theology that will inform both their thinking and their practice' (p. 56).

- **How might tensions arising from a dual inspection system – especially with regard to leadership – be further explored?**
- **How can the way in which leaders incorporate theological literacy and the established doctrines of Christianity into schools be explored?**
- **Is there is a fundamental question about the degree to which Christian headteachers ought to be expected to understand the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith rather than requiring space to develop such an understanding 'on the job'?**

1.8 Models of leadership

Just as education is not a neutral endeavour, so principles of leadership can be examined for their underlying beliefs about the world and the purpose of human life. As we know, the absence of religious foundation for a belief, theory, model, or framework, does not imply neutrality. Secular leadership principles can also be considered in light of their compatibility with a Christian worldview.

The Church of England's *Vision for Education* holds 'life in all its fullness' and notions of human dignity and human flourishing as central. These cannot be separated from the underlying worldview of the Church of England that demonstrates a profoundly Christian view of the purpose of human life.

With this in mind, we draw upon models of leadership that, while secular in origin, may contribute to thinking. Conceptions of leadership that might speak to Christian leadership include:

- Moral leadership
- Servant leadership
- Spiritual leadership
- Ethical leadership
- Principled leadership
- Virtuous leadership
- Effective leadership.

In terms of how Christian leadership in schools can be understood, Fadare cautions against oversimplifying by, for example, 'equating servant leadership to spiritual leadership, equating protestant Christians to all Christian denominations, equating Christian school leaders to spiritual leaders, and equating Christian primary and secondary school leaders to Christian college and University leaders' (Fadare, 2016: 86)

→ Will it be necessary to define what 'effective Christian leadership' means before asking 'what works?'

1.8.1 Servant leadership

Perhaps the concept of leadership with the most obvious overtones of Christianity is 'servant leadership'.

Created as a concept by Greenleaf in the 1970s, it has been described as an altruistic calling due to a 'leader's deep-rooted desire to make a positive difference in others' lives' (Heyler and Martin, 2018: 231).

The concept 'has gained significant traction in the literature' (Heyler & Martin, 2018) in recent years. A search of 30 education and business databases returned over 4,000 hits for the term. 886 hits remained even upon narrowing to scholarly peer reviewed journals within the last 5 years in English (721 for linked full text availability). The *Journal of Business Ethics* held more relevant titles than any other periodical. Narrowing down to this publication to gain a sense of what has been studied, we see servant leadership studied (through 26 papers) in relation to:

- Organisational commitment and antisocial behaviour;
- Quality of family life; work to family conflict;
- Organisational citizenship behaviour;
- Follower engagement; employee engagement;
- Group social capital;
- Employees' emotional labour;
- Organizational performance.

One title looked at the 'servant leadership behaviour scale'. One title was a systematic review. Parris and Peachey (2013) identified empirical studies that look at servant leadership theory that narrowed the field down to 39 'appropriate' studies. Important findings from the review were that:

- There is no consensus on the definition of servant leadership (although Heyler and Martin, 2018: 240) tell us that the concept has been 'defined more robustly';
- Servant leadership theory is being investigated across a variety of contexts, cultures, and themes;
- Researchers are using multiple measures to explore servant leadership;
- Servant leadership is a viable leadership theory that helps organizations and improves the well-being of colleagues.

While Greenleaf suggested ten characteristics of servant leadership, as many as 44 have been identified by others (Heyler and Martin, 2018).

Spears (2010) has developed Greenleaf's work, to arrive at ten typical characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community. Spears's framework is one of those drawn on in *Leadership of Character Education* to help leaders best 'share, implement and embed these virtues within their teams' (The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, 2017: 27)

Sinnicks tells us that servant leadership is not an appropriate response at all times – giving an extreme example of a military commander in battle – and suggests that 'establishing which organisational contexts are conducive to servant leadership' is an avenue for future research.

→ How might research identify the degree to which the 'servant leadership' concept is relevant in school leadership?

Giving thought to the worldview issues around servant leadership, we note Sinnicks' observation about the concept: it 'does not set out to cause assent (to 'X is good', for instance), and so does not need to provoke an emotive response through rhetorical means...' (Sinnicks 2018: 743). It puts the wellbeing of others as its highest goal. What makes servant leadership compatible with MacIntyre's political philosophy is its 'rejection of the claim to "an exclusive, professionalised authority"' (p. 743).

Other forms of leadership which 'are compatible with attempts to rationally persuade followers, and which could be integrated with servant leadership' include engaging, critical, authentic 'and so on.' (p. 745).

Heyler and Martin (2018) attempt to integrate the concept with other theories in order to strengthen it and also to propose how it might be applied to 'impact on organizational performance'. These include:

- Agency theory
- Stewardship theory
- Upper Echelons theory
- Institutional theory
- Transaction Cost theory

1.8.2 Discipling

The word 'discipleship' does not appear in the bible, but has been derived from the concept of 'disciple'. While it can refer to an individual's own journey of following Jesus, trusting him, and learning from his example, it is also used to describe the process of helping others on that journey. This latter sense is referred to with respect to making disciples used in the sense of converting others to

Jesus (Acts 14:21) and in the sense of a long-term process of helping someone grow in obedience to Jesus (Matthew 28:19).

So while the concept of discipleship of others is not unique to leadership (Piper suggests the word disciple in the New Testament is synonymous with being a Christian (Piper, 2016), it may be worth considering the relevance of discipleship in the concept in an overview of Christian leadership; the making of a Christian leader is, arguably, also the making of a disciple.

Collinson (2005) in the journal *Evangelical Review of Theology* writes that

...true Christian discipling is dependent on a close, personal relationship with God himself as Lord, made possible through the death of Jesus on the cross, into which the learner voluntarily chooses to enter by faith. By his Holy Spirit God enters into the life of the believer, teaches, encourages and gives gifts which are to be used for service and for building up the community of faith.

(Collinson 2005: 250)

The process of Christian discipling may not be something that headteachers would claim to do, or indeed have the power to do given the requirement for the Holy Spirit within those being disciplined. Nevertheless, Church of England headteachers are likely to recognise:

- the importance of taking Jesus message to the world as integral to their own active faith;
- the sense that Christians cannot separate out their beliefs into private and public spheres, but must remain personal integrity in all that they do, while respecting the right of others to express their own freedom of religion;

- that Christian virtues originate in Jesus teaching about the spirit of God's laws, and any Christian consideration of flourishing should take Jesus teaching as a central focus.

These three considerations mean aspects of discipleship may be useful.

A search for the term 'discipling' on 'Academic Search Complete' using all databases limited to full text scholarly work since 1973 returned 146 mentions. Most were not relevant, and those that were, were conceptual in nature and not empirical or meta-analytical. Themes of potential interest were:

- The role of Jesus as a theological educator both of 'the crowd' and of his immediate followers (Ferdinando, 2013). Although engaging with the issue of theological education, within a school with a Christian focus, this idea of teaching like Jesus could be relevant for how senior leaders train middle leaders, as well as how teachers convey messages to pupils. The paper certainly speaks to the idea of modelling: that the way in which teachers are selected has bearing on the messages they pass on to pupils:

Instead of spending a number of free years searching for the value and meaning of our human existence... most students are constantly trying to 'earn' credits... willing to sacrifice even their own growth.... a more or less exclusive focus on academic criteria for staff appointments apparently implies that the purpose of the training is primarily to develop students' cognitive skills... [which] is scarcely adequate.

(Ferdinando 2013: 373)

- The importance of moral formation as an important part of discipleship, i.e. Following Christ (Austin & Geivett, 2013), and notably for schools, for
- development of character: "Jesus himself stressed the need for obedience as a condition for knowing God deeply, for obedience leads to personal transformation in character..." (p. 296).
- The importance of discipling as a model of teaching with six components: relational, intentional, informal, communal, reciprocal, and centrifugal (outward) (Collinson, 2005)
- The importance of Jesus commissioning of his followers to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19-20, NIV) as the 'raison d'etre' for Christian schools, and 'our Lord's goal for us and for our students [as encompassing] these three factors: To know Christ; To become like Christ; To share Christ' (Fryar, 1996).

→ **How appropriate and/or helpful might the role of leaders in 'discipling' young people be?**

When Jesus said that the 'harvest is plentiful but the workers are few' (Matthew 9:37) he was referring to the need for people to hear the gospel message wherever they are. The Church of England's *Setting God's People Free*⁵ initiative recognises that '98% of the people in the Church of England are not ordained and spend 95% of our lives out in society' (p. 2). The Church as a gathering of God's people where the Word and Sacrament

⁵ <https://www.churchofengland.org/SGPF>

are present needs to feed its people so that they can disciple others in their 'Monday to Saturday lives' (*ibid.*). Since reformer Martin Luther first challenged the secular-sacred divide, Christians have come to understand how their daily lives reflect a vocation just as critical to the kingdom of God as that of ordained clergy.

→ How best can the Christian faith and identity of those exercising leadership in schools be developed so that they see themselves as 'being' the church in their educational institutions and bringing the kingdom of God to those places?

1.8.3 Moral leadership (and/or Virtue leadership)

We include this category because there is a body of knowledge in the management literature as well as the ethics literature (and their intersection) that looks at the role of morality in leadership. What we find, perhaps not surprisingly, is that Christian and secular assumptions about the origins and rationality of morality are at odds.

In the *Journal of Business Ethics*, Wang and Hackett (2016) attempt to conceptualise and measure virtuous leadership drawing on Confucian and Aristotelian concepts. They define it as conceptually separate from related perspectives 'including virtues-based leadership in the positive organizational behaviour literature, and from ethical and value-laden (spiritual, servant, charismatic, transformational, and authentic) leadership' (p. 321). They develop and validate a Virtuous Leadership Questionnaire.

The *Journal of Moral Theology* is another source of thinking in this field. Cloutier and Mattison (Cloutier & Mattison, 2014) run

through a history of moral thought in a piece entitled 'The resurgence of virtue in recent moral theology'. In part this revival is due to pioneers in the field Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre.

MacIntyre is said to be cited more frequently in the business ethics literature 'than any other living virtue ethicist' (Sinnicks, 2018). MacIntyre's early years were spent 'as a Marxist wrestling with the basis for his moral objections to Stalinist atrocities and the failure and manipulation of deterministic social science' (Cross, 2013: 227). He is therefore coming at the problem of morality from a worldview opposed to theism.

His 'magnum opus' of 1981 *After Virtue: A study in moral theory* critiqued the concept of management as one that aims to be neutral and value free but is in fact emotivistic (and therefore inherently amoral and manipulative). Sinnicks describes emotivism as 'the doctrine that moral assertions are, in essence, statements of preference' (Sinnicks 2018: 736). At this point, we need to take care to understand the worldview being expressed. The idea that moral assertions are preferences that express emotions rather than absolute truth is a truth claim in itself.

MacIntyre's recognition of 'a key feature of our culture, i.e. the acceptance that there is no moral truth, and that moral claims merely reflect subjective preference' tells us that perhaps the dismissal of 'emotivistic' as 'bad' has more to say about the subjective nature of values in a postmodern society than it does about the act of influencing others by persuasion. What if, for the Christian leader, a moral argument for a particular course of action *is* an attempt at 'rational persuasion' rather than a statement of 'subjective preference'? (p. 736).

Although there are instrumental, rational, mechanistic approaches to management (Weber's notions of bureaucracy and Taylor's

concept of scientific management are two examples) an increasing focus on 'leadership' in the late 20th century moved away from the rational to conceptions of leadership that 'foreground charisma, vision, and inspiration' (p. 741). Yet Sinnicks argues that MacIntyre's claims about emotivism still apply to leadership. He holds MacIntyre's view that emotivism is 'non-rational manipulation' and that this is what 'contemporary forms of leadership' do (p. 741).

For MacIntyre, the manager is value free because they are 'incapable of entering into a genuine moral argument' due to the nature of moral statements (by a secular understanding) as subjective wherein 'conflict between rival values cannot be settled'.

Sinnicks suggests that under MacIntyre's political philosophy, the 'good' leader will 'be principally concerned to sustain the workplace community... to facilitate common deliberation within those communities, and ultimately to serve the common good' (p. 742). He claims that the emphasis on 'moral education and flourishing' is the most attractive part of MacIntyre's work.

Sinnicks proposes that Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership 'offers both a promising alternative to emotivistic forms of leadership and management' (p. 736) while capturing 'some of the key features of MacIntyre's work' (p. 736). This statement leads us to think the underpinnings of Greenleaf's concept needs further study. Sinnicks's paper sheds light on 'the affinities between MacIntyre's political philosophy and Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership'.

What is at stake in this debate is an understanding of whether 'good' means absolutely good, or whether it is determined by society and the correct functioning of

individuals embedded within social roles (and 'Virtues are the qualities that "enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices"' p. 133). Vos tells us that:

Stanley Hauerwas and others made great efforts to elaborate these concepts theologically, identifying practices and virtues constitutive of the church as a community formed by Bible and tradition. Virtues assume their place in the church as a 'community of faith', being a 'community of character' of people who bear witness to God's peaceable kingdom.

(Vos 2015: 133)

What MacIntyre understood as Christians responding to 'the arbitrary fiats of a cosmic despot', reformer John Calvin saw as Christians attending to the 'reason and purpose of each commandment' (Vos, 2015: 135-136).

1.8.4 Spiritual leadership

Henry and Richard Blackaby in *CT Pastors* (2007) argue that while spiritual leadership is similar in many ways to general leadership, it has distinguishing marks:

- The spiritual leader's task is to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be;
- Spiritual leaders depend on the Holy Spirit;
- Spiritual leaders are accountable to God;
- Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people;
- Spiritual leaders work from God's agenda.

The fourth point is particularly relevant to Church of England leaders in the context of their responsibility for leading staff teams as

In *The Marks of a Spiritual Leader*, Piper defines spiritual leadership as:

...knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God's methods to get them there in reliance on God's power. The answer to where God wants people to be is in a spiritual condition and lifestyle that display his glory and honour his name.

(Piper 2016: 3)

Its goal is, therefore, 'that people come to know God and to glorify him in all that they do' and 'is aimed not so much at directing people as it is at changing people' (p. 3) to be:

- restless;
- optimistic;
- intense;
- self-controlled;
- thick-skinned;
- energetic;
- a hard thinker;
- tactful;
- theologically oriented;
- a dreamer;
- organized and efficient;

well as pupils from potentially diverse background.

- articulate;
- able to teach;
- a good judge of character.

Piper helpfully lays out some principles, which he calls 'the inner circle of spiritual leadership'. These are 'that sequence of events in the human soul that must happen if anyone is to take the first step in spiritual leadership'. They are things that all Christians must attain, but when held deeply and strongly 'they very often lead to strong leadership' (p. 4):

- that others will glorify God;
- love both friend and foe by trusting in God and hoping in his promises;
- meditate on and pray over his word;
- acknowledge your helplessness.

Piper's 'outer circle of spiritual leadership' are 'qualities' that leaders must have:

- decisive;
- perseverant;
- a lover (this in the context of one's home life);
- restful.

An implicit (even explicit) integral part of the 'role' of headteacher in a Church of England school is spiritual leadership. The fact that this may happen in practice to a greater or lesser extent does not negate this aspect of the role.

In an empirical study Johnson (2000: 122) interviewed headteachers to find out how they

saw their role in the development of their children's spirituality, in maintaining a school culture consistent with the moral values of their declared belief system, and how this might contribute to the children's spiritual development'. The assumption here is that these are integral aspects of the headteacher's role in leadership.

The basis for the assumption is in the notion of 'community'. If a school is 'Christian', it is (in theory) a 'community' of individuals who share something in common. Community, however defined, argues Johnson is

...a statement about the socialization that its members have experienced, and within that process, the values and rules that they have internalized to a point that behaviour becomes predictable and, to a greater or lesser degree, automatic. Clearly, membership of a community gives its adherents an identity that in some way can distinguish them from others and other communities in society. Thus, to belong to any community is per se an expression of difference.

(Johnson 2000: 122)

→ To what degree do school leaders' own beliefs need to be explicit and shared before a school can truly be regarded as a 'faith community'?

1.8.5 Principled leadership

The phrase 'principled leadership' appears in the academic literature relatively infrequently, although it has gained some popularity through Principle-Centred Leadership (Covey, 1992). It does not always represent a theory or a defined concept. It is often an idea that describes any given writer's view of what 'good' leadership looks like. It tends to be about leadership that is driven by a sense of ethics, an underlying concern for others. It could also mean sticking to a particular set of principles, for example, when the Dalai Lama urged Nobel Peace Prize winner US President

Obama to adopt 'principled leadership' based on the country's founding ideals of freedom and liberty' (Tibetan Review, 2009).

A search using Education database 'Education Source' within the last ten years yielded just six mentions initially appearing relevant. Juliano and Soffield's 2011 piece *Principled Leadership: Think needs* focuses on a single aspect of what it called principled leadership for the Christian leader: that of thinking of the 'needs' of subordinates. Based on Maslow's *hierarchy of needs* the authors claim that needs 'are something that God places in human beings to propel them toward wholeness and holiness. They are internal drives that motivate individuals toward growth.' Their challenge to leaders is 'not only to refrain from reacting, but, more importantly, to move to the level of cognition and try to understand the need that produced the behaviour.' They give an example of this working in practice.

Based on practice of leadership training within education settings, Robertson (2005) gives ten principles for principled leadership that 'underpin the effective functioning of professional learning communities'. These are inquiry, risk-taking and challenge, responsibility and trust, shared learning, support, building capacity, quality, innovation and improvement, critical thinking and reflection, and belief.

The tenth principle (belief) and 'possibly most important to the concept of principled leadership, is a belief in oneself. This is the belief in one's own ability to do the work and to make a difference to the quality of learning in an institution... Equally important is a belief in others' (Robertson, 2005: 29). Although there may be some truth in this claim at a secular management level, it may be seen as antithetical to the biblical idea that Christians act through God's strength, God works through human weakness, and human beings' skills and abilities are gifts from God.

1.8.6 Ethical leadership

Dufresne and McKenzie 2009 use the term 'ethical leadership' which, they say 'requires a personal journey toward integrity and a public commitment to a common good. This begins with claiming one's core values, finding a personal voice, developing a vision, and consciously aligning one's attitudes and beliefs with one's actions and behaviours.' (p. 37). The term is not distinguished from principled leadership in their article where they suggest that using certain 'philosophies... to guide an organization makes it possible to practice principled leadership that integrates ethical decision making and minimizes internal conflict.' (39).

Concepts of 'ethical' or 'principled' leadership, it would seem, are merely descriptive phrases that are assumed to have an obvious meaning.

Sternberg (2017) distinguishes between the terms *moral* and *ethical*. He uses moral to refer to 'issues of right and wrong. What we learn in religious schools' classes... do not kill, do not steal...'. Although some atheists have attempted to justify a human morality outside of religion, Sternberg, wisely, does not. Instead he defines ethical leadership as

...a process of how problems are solved and decisions are made based on an ethical code - that decisions are made and problems solved not just on the basis of what will bring profit, or please shareholders, or even please consumers but also on the basis of what will be the right thing to do, based on a system of ethical reasoning and belief. That is, the ethical part of leadership is in the process of thinking based on an ethical code.

It is asking what is the right thing to do and then forming a careful chain of reasoning as to how to

reach the right course of action or correct a wrong course of action.

(Sternberg 2017: 158)

It is uncertain where such a definition of 'right' might come from, or what it is based on. But ethical leaders are those 'who leave the world looking different from and better than it did before they were in it' (p.158).

Sinnicks names a number of scholars influenced by MacIntyre's ethical theory to argue for the possibility of ethical management.

1.8.7 Effective leadership

Like the large body of work on 'school effectiveness', effective leadership is what makes an organisation effective from within the paradigm in which it is measured. An 'effective' school is generally, in terms of Ofsted⁶ or SIAMS⁷, defined as promoting 'better' pupil outcomes, i.e. adding value, over what 'would be predicted on the basis of pupils intake characteristics' (Day and Sammons 2016). School effectiveness is the prevailing paradigm by which schools in England are 'judged' and not what we are exploring here. In 2.5 we touch on its relevance to this review.

Effective management is a separate field of 'effectiveness' research; distinct from the school effectiveness literature. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* has gained an international reputation for effective leadership and self-management, one which is at first glance simply an extension of good management sense. Cullen's paper critically analyses this text to show its underpinning ideas. He shows the tension inherent in drawing upon Covey's ideas:

Covey was perhaps the first management guru to address matters of spirituality. Jackson (2001) suggests that Covey has created, in the

⁶ Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook is available: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

⁷ The SIAMS Evaluation Schedule is available: https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-04/SIAMS%20Evaluation%20Schedule%202018_0.pdf

effectiveness movement, an invisible religion: a concept similar to that of an implicit religion as described by Bell and Taylor (2004) that is not mediated through 'primary institutions' such as churches, but 'secondary institutions' such as inspirational literature, advice columns or song lyrics. This has been problematic for some Christian commentators... who are critical of the 'new age' flavour to Covey's work.

(Cullen 2009: 1,234)

Covey wrote from outside of a Christian perspective, and Christian leaders have had mixed

responses to his approach. For those who are positive: "...Covey offers a means of inducing stability in a world that is changing at a pace that has disrupted the individual's perceived ability to control what happens to their lives." (Cullen, 1,234).

Cullen's paper demonstrates the underlying 'New Age' components of Covey's *7 Habits*. It is a reminder that the adoption of any management or leadership theory can be problematic for Christians where there are underlying incompatibilities in worldview.

2. What does the evidence tell us about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership?

In order to understand what we know about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership, we need to ask: *works for what?* Even when we have answered this question there are still, naturally, challenges to evaluating what works.

2.1 Leadership for what?

What might be the Church of England’s desired outcome(s)? Its vision statement communicates that its own approach would aim to ‘educate for’ four key elements that form ‘an ‘ecology’ of the fullness of life’: Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills; Hope and Aspiration; Community and Living Well Together; Dignity and Respect. Outcomes equated with ‘success’ in the broader education literature are sometimes considered explicitly and at other times implied. Some incorporate elements of character, flourishing, and the four explicitly mentioned the *Vision*. Others might be more at odds with them. Outcomes we found, both explicit and implicit include:

- academic outcomes;
- a broader view than exam results;
- labour market or ‘real world’ success;
- Ofsted/SIAMS;
- pupil learning;
- pupil performance;
- pupils’ lives/lifestyles;
- school effectiveness;
- pupil character;
- a range of pupil outcomes;
- pupil learning outcomes versus values;
- teacher efficacy;
- wholeness.

Three small, linked, research studies (Johnson, 2002) looked at how ‘14 primary schools, led by their headteachers... transmit their beliefs and culture to their children’. The study allowed a comparison of the approaches of particular Roman Catholic, Church of England, and Quaker schools. In these instances, the desired outcomes expressed by schools were:

- Professional perspective and religious commitment;
- Values, behaviour and/or faith building;
- Parental desire for discipline and a moral sense;
- Use and awareness of Christian visual symbols;

2.2 Challenges to evaluation

A major focus for the Church of England’s work on flourishing to date is in the area of ‘character education’, within which field there is ‘a substantial body of information’ concerning its effectiveness (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004: 73). We found meta-analytic studies and literature reviews examining ‘what works’, for example, Jeynes, 2017, Algera and Sink, 2002, Berkowitz, 2011 and Berkowitz & Bier, 2005. This is not to say evaluation is straightforward, and there are ‘dilemmas facing practitioners attempting to do evaluation research in social and character development in schools’ (Brown, 2009), including appropriateness and feasibility of assessment tools.

The Church of England’s work with the Jubilee Centre has been its most significant partnership in this area. *Leadership of Character Education* (The Church of England Foundation for Educational

- Devolved or determined values – ‘Church of England headteachers shared a tentative and ambivalent compromise between determined values and inclusivity’ (p. 216).

Johnson noted ‘definite echoes of a theologically liberal position’ from the Church of England headteachers, where ‘What the Anglican tradition comprised and comprises was not explored... there was no certainty about how ‘religious’ the worship should be... [and for] two of the headteachers... ‘the use of the name of Jesus could be excluding’ in the multi-cultural context (p. 214). She described leadership of CE schools as ‘ambivalent’ (p. 217).

Leadership, 2017) is the most recent of these, sitting within the context of a range of resources produced by Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership to support school leaders in relation to the *Vision for Education*. The material for leaders provides prompts for self-reflection that ensures ‘that evaluation is formative not summative in nature’ (p. 39).

As the focus for the Church of England’s ‘approach to developing and celebrating human flourishing’ (2017: 5), character education and academic outcomes are ‘strongly linked’ (p. 60).

Outside of the area of character education, the idea of leadership for flourishing is under evaluated. It is a small field of study with only a small core number of journals that might make some contribution. In term of what ‘works’ to bring about the Church of England’s four explicit desired outcomes, there is very little evidence – beyond the character education contribution – of

what makes for effective practice. There are virtually no well-evaluated questions.

In the US, Character.org is a national organisation that aims to foster character development in communities. Since 1993 it has validated and certified school-based character initiative through its '11 Principles of Character'. Through a network of leaders, it mentors educators. In terms of evaluation of 'what works': each year, schools and organisations across the world apply to complete a 'Promising Practice' which is a programme sponsored by Character.org that aims to showcase best practice. Promising Practices are initiatives that align with a number of the 11 Principles of Character.

When we ask 'what works?' in Christian school leadership, questions might be:

- **What do we mean by what 'works'; how can we measure, track, or assess success?**
- **In terms of interventions or practices that lead to desired outcomes, how much evaluation is there; how good are those evaluations?**
- **Are we concerned with what works for 'flourishing' in general; or other desired outcomes?**
- **To what degree can we expect all people to flourish outside of a biblical perspective on the purpose of human life?**
- **What is a gospel-centred, biblical, perspective on flourishing and how can/should this be integrated into/inform school values, lesson content, and teacher development etc?**
- **If you know what 'Christian leadership' looks like, how can you evaluate it?**

2.3 Leadership for flourishing and 'life in all its fullness'

Outside of a Christian perspective, many have tried to understand what makes human beings tick; what actually constitutes the 'good life'. The philosophical search for wisdom goes back to the ancient Greeks, to Socrates and to Aristotle's study of virtues.

The Church of England's mission to serve the common good reflects Jesus commissioning of his community of learners, the disciples. This mission is articulated in its 2016 *Vision for Education*, which sees schools as 'signs of fullness of life for all, as they educate children for wisdom, knowledge and skills, for hope and aspiration, for community and living well together, and for dignity and respect' (p. 8). It recognises the holistic nature of this 'fullness' – encompassing 'the whole of culture' and having something to say about how individuals 'live before God in family, friendship, community and nation'.

Five examples of what 'fullness of life' might mean are given:

- **Blessing** – children are blessed (e.g. by the gift of education) and go on to *be* a blessing;
- **Creativity** – schools should value all subjects as reflecting something of God's world;
- **Joy** – the process of learning and the subjects being taught should spark wonder;
- **Glory** – honouring those made in God's image;
- **Reconciling** – this seems to be about open mindedness, while also recognising conscience, and perhaps respectful dialogue where there is difference of opinion. The Church of England is open to 'rethinking, changing positions, and repentance' as they become 'open to the wisdom of different traditions' (p. 12).

Alongside this vision for reconciliation, the Church of England recognises that there are tenets of orthodox Christian faith, handed down since the early church, that are not open to negotiation. These tenets are reflected in The Apostles' Creed and The Nicene Creed, and also in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Beyond these 'essentials', there are an array of beliefs where reconciliation may be possible. In the well-known words attributed to seventeenth century theologian Meldenius: *'In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity'*.

As a broad church incorporating those from Anglo-Catholic, evangelical or liberal backgrounds, Christian leaders of all traditions will need to ground their understanding of 'flourishing' in a coherent theology-led worldview to lead with integrity, as well as to recognise when reconciliation is possible.

In terms of helping pupils to develop a coherent worldview, Schultz and Swezey (2013) cite six studies (in the ten year period to 2008) as examples of research investigating 'some aspect of worldview'. They observe, that

...few evaluate the effectiveness of school efforts to inculcate a comprehensive biblical worldview in their students, though it appears to be a nearly universal practice to evaluate the effectiveness of their academic efforts through standardized testing.

(Schultz and Swezey 2013: 229)

→ **The Church of England may wish to consider the question of what is meant by 'flourishing'. It might be helpful to take a systematic theological perspective to develop a clear rationale for explaining what is meant by 'flourishing' in a biblical sense.**

It is important to take stock here and recognise that the Church of England as a whole is addressing the rapid changes in society on a number of fronts, but particularly represented by what tends to be referred to as the sexual revolution. For example, in response to the Government's consultation on changing the Gender Recognition Act the Church of England states that it is

...engaged in a major exercise of addressing its own pastoral practice among LGBTI+ people (including transgender people) and is conducting an extensive study to enable the church and its members to understand better, and reflect theologically upon, questions of gender, sex and sexuality.

(Brown 2018)⁸

The project referred to here is described as 'a programme of careful listening to many groups' including 'many people within and beyond the church'. In thinking about what constitutes leadership for flourishing, it may be helpful to develop a clearer position on what biblical flourishing means in the context of the many complex issues facing Christian leaders in schools.

2.4 Leadership for Wisdom, Hope, Community, Dignity

The Church of England's *Vision for Education* contains four core strands to its vision that enable leaders to think about how the vision can be worked out theologically and educationally. These are at their core: Wisdom, Hope, Community, and Dignity or, more fulsomely:

- Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Educating for Hope and Aspiration

⁸<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/201810/Gender%20Recognition%20Act%20consultation%20response.pdf>

- Educating for Community and Living Well Together
- Educating for Dignity and Respect

This review undertakes to shed light on the way in which each of these strands can be understood in light of current literature, where present. The meaning of each of these terms has to be understood in a theological and well as an educational context, and any inherent tensions between the two need deep consideration by leaders, as well as those educating them. This review discusses each strand, and looks at some of the questions that these issues might raise for further discussion.

2.4.1 Wisdom

From any Christian perspective, wisdom and theology are inseparable, yet it 'is not a word that is much used in contemporary discussions of education' (The Church of England Education Office, 2016; 9).

What might 'wisdom' mean from a psychological perspective? To Robert Sternberg, it is something akin to thinking about fixing the world's problems. It is related to common sense, or 'practical intelligence' (Sternberg, 2017: 161).

Sternberg has had much to contribute in the field of 'gifted' education. His work on developing the ACCEL model (the Active Concerned Leadership and Ethical Leadership model for identifying and developing the gifted) recognised the 'need to infuse gifted education with a liberal dose of morality, values, and ethics' (McCluskey, 2017: 197). 'Gifted' individuals, he argues, are important because they are needed to solve 'the greatest problems facing the world [such as] global warming, interminable wars, staggering levels of air pollution, and the like' (p. 153).

Sternberg's ACCEL model attempts to move beyond ideas of using IQ 'that have outlived their usefulness' (p. 152) and to use instead the characteristics of expert real-world problem solvers to identify those children who are 'gifted' and in possession of 'a broader range of skills and attitudes, such as creative, practical (common sense), wisdom-based, and ethical ones' (p. 153).

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues conducts research into these two areas within education. Its *Framework for Character in Schools* takes an Aristotelian perspective in its underlying position that

...a number of virtues are help in common across humanity. A key tenet of this philosophy is the proposition that there are proto-typical or universal 'goods' to which people, whatever their background, adhere and relate to in some capacity.

(Ward & Harrison: 4)⁹

Evidence suggests that certain 'virtues' (for example: courage, justice, honesty, compassion, gratitude, and humility) are accessible and recognisable to children in all classrooms. The broader concept of 'character education' relates to the educational activities, both implicit and explicit, 'that help young people develop positive personal strengths called virtues' (p. 3).

Practical wisdom can be defined as 'the capacity to choose intelligently between alternatives. This capacity involves knowing how to choose the right course of action in difficult situations and it arises gradually out of the experience of making choices and the growth of ethical insight' (Jubilee Centre, 2017: 3).

One example the Jubilee Centre gives is of the 'British Value' of 'tolerance'. Tolerance here does not mean accepting the validity of a belief; rather it is accepting an individual's right to hold and express that belief. The Jubilee Centre proposes

⁹ http://jubileecentre.tiarc-staging.co.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/insight-series/Ward_Harrison_Casey%20Review_Insight%20Series.pdf

the 'golden-mean' is the point at which the absence or presence of tolerance is neither intolerance nor passivity.

Attempts to bring critical thinking more overtly into education through the use of philosophy-led approaches like Sapere's¹⁰ *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) have demonstrated their effectiveness – in terms of cognitive and social benefits – through research trials.

P4C uses the philosophical enquiry method, where a trained teacher encourages children to think and reason as a group; to listen to each others' ideas and to build on them. Rooted in Greek ideas of philosophy it asks existential questions such as: is there life after death? How should we live? What kind of world do we live in? It can involve children learning to develop their own meaningful philosophical questions that they can engage in answering together.

In July 2015 the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) published its report *Philosophy for Children: Evaluation report and executive summary* (Gorard, Siddiqui, & See, 2015). The project assessed whether a year of instruction in P4C (school Years 4 and 5) would lead to higher academic attainment in maths, reading, and writing, and separately, whether it would impact upon scores on a Cognitive Abilities Test. The study of 48 English schools was given a 'moderate' rating by the EEF in terms of the security of its findings. P4C was shown to have a positive impact on Key Stage 2 attainment (two additional months' progress in reading and maths), which was strongest among disadvantaged pupils. CAT testing found a smaller positive impact, with fewer for disadvantaged pupils. In terms of wider impacts, pupils and teachers 'generally reported that P4C had a positive influence on the wider outcomes such as pupils' confidence to speak, listening skills, and self-esteem' (p. 3).

In terms of the biblical precedent for engaging in philosophy, we did not find literature addressing

the issue of P4C approaches from a Christian perspective. Yet these sorts of questions will resonate with Christian leaders and provide an opportunity for young people and their teachers to consider the logical basis for belief. It is also the foundation for Christian apologetics. There are numerous examples of former atheists finding themselves converted to Christianity following their own process of open inquiry. Three well-known ones are C.S. Lewis, Anthony Flew (philosopher and formerly leading atheist later convinced by the logic of a deist position), and Lee Strobel (former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune) whose book *The Case for Christ* (2016) concludes with:

I'll admit it: I was ambushed by the amount and quality of the evidence that Jesus is the unique Son of God...I shook my head in amazement. I had seen defendants carted off to the death chamber on much less convincing proof! The cumulative facts and data pointed unmistakably towards a conclusion that I wasn't entirely comfortable in reaching.

(Strobel 2016: 264)

In a piece propounding the importance of teaching children philosophical reasoning, Pohoățã and Petrescu (2013) point out that philosophy is not ideology (p. 11), an important distinction in today's often ideologically-driven culture. They also argue that 'philosophizing means living better... a real invitation to reflection, to thinking at the children's level, even if they are not spiritually ready for the invitation to self-knowledge' (p. 10). It would seem that Philosophy for Children approaches could be of benefit to children led by Christian school leaders whose orienting questions are of the sort: *what is the good life, and how can we help young people flourish?*

→ How might Christian school leaders think about incorporating philosophically-driven approaches into school in a way that develops

¹⁰ <https://www.sapere.org.uk/>

children's ability to consider issues of spirituality?

From any Christian perspective, wisdom and theology are inseparable.

Jonathan Strandjord (2014) uses the term theology 'in its more original sense, referring to a sort of *wisdom that is proper to the life of faith*' (p. 247). At the centre of the matter, however, is a complexity that the Church of England must address in considering leadership for wisdom. Strandjord's piece on the importance of theological education (in the context of church leadership) is based on the belief that it is necessary to interpret the Bible in light of an ever-changing culture. To him, this 'theological education that is freshly imagined' (p. 253) and 'fresh hearing of the living word' (p. 254) is where wisdom comes from. He writes:

In a time when social, economic, and cultural change is very rapid and pluralism multiplies... faith seeking understanding has a great deal of work to do. First of all, in seeking one's own understanding of the tradition received, it is necessary to reinterpret it for a situation that differs greatly from the contexts it has passed through on its way to this time and place.

(Strandjord 2014: 252)

This is a liberal-theological perspective. At stake here is the foundational issue of the authority of Scripture. Article 6 of The Church of England's *Articles of Religion* (His Majesty King Charles I, 1562) recognises the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation. It recognises the canonical books contained within the Bible to be those that the early church also recognised as divinely inspired and 'whose authority was never in doubt in the Church' (Article 6). It further recognises that 'it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's written word' (Article 20).

Although the Church of England's *Vision for Education* recognises that the Church 'encourages

others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings [and] invites... negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society...' (p. 2) there is inevitably a fine line between the ability to reconcile views, and the place where difference must be allowed to flourish. A deep understanding of the nature of these differences may be helpful for those in school leadership in order for them to maintain integrity in their own biblical interpretation.

The concept of educating for wisdom is not new. Church father Augustine's theology of education was heavily influenced by his quest for wisdom. He was the first Church Father to analyse the 'liberal arts curricula' of the ancient world and bring it to bear on Christian instruction. His three purposes for education were happiness, virtue, and community (Topping, 2012). Topping's book *Happiness from Wisdom: Augustine's early theology of education* argues that 'the liberal arts fit within Augustine's view of the good life... by adopting the same final purpose, happiness, as well as by establishing the cultivation of virtue and the formation of a Christian community as a means of accompanying and supporting that final goal... (p. 229).

→ In terms of the importance of biblical wisdom: how much of the 'wisdom' leaders teach should come directly from the Bible?

The biblical concept of 'holiness' provides a good example for Christian leaders of the idea of the golden mean. Christians are called to be holy, yet the Christian's merit and righteousness before God comes entirely from the work of Jesus in the form of Grace (Calvin, 2009; first published 1536). Jerry Bridges, in *Transforming Grace* (2008) talks of the importance of learning to distinguish between legalism (acting as though 'God's grace is conditional, that there is a degree to which it is based on our performance') and license ('abuse of

our freedom in order to indulge our sinful nature' (p. 160) in the Christian journey. He argues that 'When you focus on grace in the fullness of its meaning, you will keep the law, liberty, and love in their proper relationship to one another' (p. 160). The 'built-up road [below] represents grace that allows you to drive safely through the swampland of legalism and license.

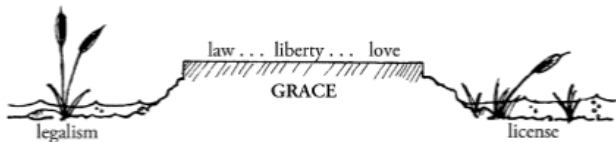


Figure 2 Bridges' (2008) representation of 'grace' as the safe road between legalism and license

A biblical wisdom is different, however, from worldly wisdom. At its heart, Christian wisdom is about living a life that follows God's laws, and the Bible is clear that this will seem like 'foolishness' to the world. For example:

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. (Psalm 111:10)
- For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:18)
- Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. (1 Cor 1:21-2)
- It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (1 Cor 1:30).

→ **What are the implications of a biblical understanding of wisdom for the way it is taught in schools?**

Scouller tells us that in *Learning for Wisdom: Christian education and the good life*, Taylor makes a philosophical discussion of 'the proper foundations for Christian education, including the considerable benefits a general education offers by way of developing true wisdom' (Scouller, 2018). The latter chapters deal with practical guides for teachers and curriculum writers for how 'curriculum areas can enhance the development of wisdom in the honest seeker of truth' (Scouller, 2018: 181).

In the *Journal of Latin American Theology*, Eckert (2016) writes on education and wisdom arguing that the Bible emphasises that the point of education is to become wise. Other goals such as intellectual knowledge or skills are 'reductionist' and, she argues the more reductionist the goal of education, 'the less it leads to an abundant life and the farther it falls from wisdom' (p. 95). Her rationale for making this claim is that wisdom is, 'in essence, the mediator and promotor of life in its fullness' (p. 95). In a pluralistic and postmodern society, where truth is understood to be relative, Eckert counters this with her statement that 'According to the Bible, being wise or having wisdom means making decisions based on the fear of the Lord, with the ability to discern the time and manner of doing the appropriate things without falling into either legalism or relativism' (p. 95).

Wise people in the bible, she argues, 'hold two basic characteristics in common: they are humble and seek reconciliation' (p. 96). Wisdom is developed through education when the educational process itself reflects wisdom. Many of the processes she describes are what we might commonly describe as good learning habits. For example: using dialogue to encourage others to reflect, become convicted, and act; intentional observation and the drawing of conclusions that bear influence on one's own life; drawing truth from parables; helping others discern the 'spirit of

the law' and so walking the fine line between legalism and relativism. This is the same principle drawn on by Christian author Jerry Bridges in his book *Transforming Grace*.

Steel's *the Pursuit of Wisdom and Happiness in Education* examines the importance of aiming for wisdom as a goal of education. Reviewed in the *Journal of Catholic Education* (2015), the review summarises Steel's thinking about the current system thus:

Steel traces the current system to Dewey's conceptualization of public education as a necessary precondition for democracy. Universal education sounds like a good idea, but has resulted in an emphasis [on] the acquisition of practical skills - what Steel calls "technical" education - over nurturing a love of learning for learning's sake, or the pursuit of wisdom. Such pursuit was a hallmark of liberal education, which had been seen as the purview of the elite classes.

(Steel 2015: 242)

Martinez, reviewing, tells us that this emphasis on universal, technical education, de-contextualises the purpose of education, encouraging the individual 'to seek the things of the world'.

Rather than seeing Christian wisdom as the goal of education, Dewey's philosophy of education was grounded in Darwin's work on natural selection as an explanatory mechanism for the observed diversity in nature. In *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (1910) Dewey saw an argument against objective truth as being a logical step in thinking. Dewey suggested that Darwin had effectively transformed the way we think about morality, politics and religion.

Dewey's *A Common Faith* (1962) assured his readers that religion would become void as a result of scientific thinking. For Dewey, the pursuit of 'desirable' social goals was a religious activity itself, as indicated in the book's title. In *Culture Shift* (2011), Albert Mohler writes:

In his book A Common Faith, Dewey advocated a radically secular vision for the public schools and the larger public culture. His concept of a humanistic faith, stripped of all supernatural claims, doctrines, and theological authorities, would replace Christianity as the dominant, culture-shaping worldview. "Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race," he claimed. "Such a faith has always been the common faith of mankind. It remains for us to make it explicit and militant.

(Mohler 2011: 58)

Rather than thinking about 'what sort of citizens do we want', educators and policy-makers began to think 'what do we need them to be able to do'. These approaches to education have been influential in the education landscape since the early 20th century.

On a similar note, one should also consider a review of Topping's book *Happiness and Wisdom: Augustine's early theology of education* by Olson (2014). Topping contrasts the purpose of education in Augustine's day with contemporary education: 'Augustine saw liberal arts as windows to eternity, whereas modern education sees education as a tool for gain' (Topping 2012: 125). This book is also reviewed by Shelton (2013) who tells us that Augustine – whose writings are foundational to Christian interpretation of bible – believed that 'the liberal arts experience is a means to subject one's heart submissively to God that leads to a powerful model for both intellectual learning and for spiritual development' (p. 449).

In Haberberger's (2018) piece *A Return to Understanding: Making liberal education valuable again*, she argues that the 'perceived necessity for liberal arts colleges to offer vocational education' (p. 1052) means that 'true' liberal arts colleges are in decline and the promise of a liberal education is in decline. A liberal education, it has been argued by scholars, has a chief objective of creating wise citizens. This paper provides an interesting

background to the issue faced by liberal arts colleges in a competitive world.

→ Do Christian leaders need to think about the contrasting role of secular and Christian education when guiding school values and policies?

2.4.2 Hope

The Church of England's *Vision for Education* speaks of hope in the context of aspiration (hope that there might be a positive future for each child); reconciliation (that relationships can be restored) coping (that children might learn resilience when things go wrong or when evil happens), and truth (which gives us purpose).

This last point returns us to Augustine. He reflected upon and developed the work of earlier philosophers. Topping makes this interesting observation about the divergence of Augustine's work from earlier positions:

Lacking metaphysical certainty regarding the nature of the soul and its highest object of aspiration, Cicero the educator was unable to support the hope required to sustain an educational inquiry into the truth. While Augustine exhorts his own students to the love of truth, he does this on the basis of an explicitly Trinitarian metaphysical structure which, he believes, makes possible the virtue of hope.

(Topping 2012: 68)

From a biblical perspective, hope is found in the person of Jesus, born in human form, died, and now resurrected. Hebrews 11.1 tells us that 'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.' Psalm 78 teaches an important thing about the purpose of education:

...so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born,

*and they in turn would tell their children.
Then they would put their trust in God.*

(Psalm 78:6-7)

The Bible teaches us that knowledge of the truth brings people to love God and put their hope in Him. But what do we know about educating for hope?

A search for 'educating for hope' returns various citations of a 2017 book on climate change *Educating for Hope in Troubled Times*. A review of it in *Journal of Peace Education* tells us:

Hicks's argument for the importance of hope is likely to have a strong resonance not just for environmental educators. It is likely to strike a similar chord for those working in related fields such as peace education, human rights education, global education and futures education. Critical questions are raised about how to deal constructively with major environmental or other problems, without being thoroughly overwhelmed by toxic fears, a sense of psychic numbing and fatalism about the future.

(Hutchinson 2017: 253)

The book's author calls for sharing of 'resources of hope' such as real-world stories and inspirational examples.

In terms of the Church of England's approach to drawing people to the truth in its *Vision for Education* document:

Many will enjoy the wine and not recognise where it comes from; some will, with our help, trace it to who is responsible for it; but whether our inspiration for doing what we do is acknowledged or not, it is the right thing to do - as followers of the One who came to bring life in all its fullness, to do signs that give glory to God.

(Church of England Education Office 2016: 8)

→ How explicit should leaders be about helping individuals 'recognise where it comes from'?

2.4.3 Community

Within this aspect of ‘fullness of life’, the Church of England’s *Vision for Education* mentions the importance of ‘qualities of character that enable people to flourish together’. Of all the desired outcomes expressed in that document, ‘character’ is the best researched. In the UK, character education was, for a time, at the forefront of education policy, led by former Secretary of State for Education Nicky Morgan (2017). The Church of England has produced its own report of *Leadership of Character Education* (2017) which builds on the discussion paper *The Fruit of the Spirit* (The Church of England Education Office, 2015). Education Secretary Damian Hinds also spoke at the 2019 Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership conference¹¹ about the importance of building character and resilience in children.

The Education Endowment Foundation¹² has conducted reviews of the strength of research evidence in 14 high priority areas that pertain to improving attainment and wider outcomes of children and young people. Areas of potential relevance for this literature scan are

- Character and essential life skills;
- Aspiration interventions: very low or no impact for moderate cost based on very limited evidence;
- Behaviour interventions: moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence;
- Metacognition and self-regulation: high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence;
- Social and emotional learning: moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence;

- Mentoring: low impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence;
- Arts participation: low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence;
- Sports participation: low impact for moderate cost, based on limited evidence;
- Outdoor adventure learning: moderate impact for moderate cost based on limited evidence;
- Enrichment (encompasses aspiration interventions, arts participation, sports participation, and outdoor adventure learning);
- Parental engagement: moderate impact for moderate cost, based on moderate evidence;
- Developing effective learners -
 - Collaborative learners: moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence;
 - Metacognition and self-regulation;
 - Peer tutoring: moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.

Most of what we uncovered about the success of character education programmes was US focused, and there is strong evidence to support this. There are a multitude of character development programmes in existence, with varying levels of assessment for impact. We identified ten programmes without looking systematically.

The Jubilee Centre has conducted work on character and virtues that is a valuable resource for researchers looking to understand impact and practice within this area. Character, writes Lickona, includes

...moral virtues such as honesty and kindness, civic virtues such as community service, intellectual

¹¹ Speech available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-out-five-foundations-to-build-character>

¹² <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/>

virtues such as curiosity and creativity, and performance virtues such as diligence and perseverance.

(Arthur et al. 2015: 4)

This statement appears as the foreword in a report from the Jubilee Centre documenting a study involving 10,000 UK pupils. The study found that any school can nurture 'good' character, given 'the right approach'. Some commonalities were found across the 'top seven schools' rated for pupils' performance on a moral dilemma test of their ethical reasoning including:

- Strong school commitment to developing the whole child; at least one teacher 'knowledgeable and passionate' about this emphasis;
- High school priority on moral teaching; time and flexibility to discuss moral issues;
- Ability to rely on school's families to develop good character in their children.

The Fruit of the Spirit (The Church of England Education Office, 2015) has already raised some interesting pedagogical questions and their implications for teacher development.

A meta-analysis by Jeynes (2017) examined 52 studies. While she found that there are difficulties in assessing character education programmes, Jeynes claims that research findings are likely to be on the conservative side of reality because they can only 'examine the influence of moral instruction over a short period of time' (p. 7). Findings show 'a clear relationship between character education and pupil outcomes overall. The overall relationship appears to be about 0.3 to 0.4 of a standard deviation, which, in academic terms, would be about 0.4 of a GPA unit on a 4-point grading scale' (p. 28-29).

The Character Education Partnership produced a research-driven guide for educators called *What Works in Character Education* (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005). They identified 109 studies, and narrowed this down to 78, based on scientific rigour of

research design. 69 of these covered the 33 character education programmes deemed effective. The study made a number of conclusions and helpful recommendations for practitioners. What it could not assess was whether character education fosters particular 'abstract character traits' (p22) because those impacts were not explored in the studies. What it did find in terms of impact was that significant positive effects were found on things like socio-moral cognition, pro-social behaviours and attitudes, problem-solving skills, drug use, violence/aggression, school behaviour, knowledge/attitudes about risk, emotional competency, academic achievement, attachment to school, general misbehaviour, personal morality, and character knowledge.

An earlier meta-analysis by Jeynes (2010) demonstrates the importance of both personal religion and attendance of a faith school to closing the achievement gap for black African-American pupils. The US context limits generalisation of findings because of the differences in understanding of what a 'Christian education' is between US and UK Christians. In a highly instrumental take on religion, Jeynes puts the findings down to a number of possible causes: firstly the 'Protestant work ethic'; secondly, the internal 'locus of control' possessed by religious people and; thirdly, the higher likelihood that religious people 'avoid behaviours that are typically regarded as undisciplined and harmful to educational achievement' (Jeynes 2010: 276).

Berkowitz (2012) cites evidence from the US Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse that identified 13 effective programmes. His own 2005 review for The Character Education Partnership and The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's Safe and Sound found that 34 of the 80 programmes they reviewed had either strong or promising evidence of effectiveness, and their more recent meta-analysis of 213 programs further supports these conclusions, (Berkowitz 2011).

His 2011 paper identifies a range of organisations with helpful content for those looking to implement 'research-supported character education practices' (p. 158) as well as listing '15 categories of educational practice [that are] identified as having a research based that supports their effectiveness in fostering the development of character' (p. 154). These are: peer interactive strategies (cooperative learning, moral dilemma discussion), service to others, developmental discipline, role-modelling and mentoring, nurturing, trust and trustworthiness, high expectations, school-wide character focus, family/community involvement, pedagogy of empowerment, teaching about character, teaching social-emotional competencies, induction, and professional development.

Predating this work is a more cautious take on character education from within a Christian schools perspective from Algera and Sink (2002) in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education*. It is not clear from subsequent reviews whether the methodological issues noted in the 2002 paper have been addressed. The meta-analyses cited above implemented their own quality control on research papers they included. It is worth saying in relation to this 2002 paper that none of the concerns highlighted by Algera and Sink were substantially worldview related in their orientation.

Notably, they recommend that programmes should be tailored to schools' own mission and goals rather than using off-the-peg programmes. This is not to say they don't believe there is a set of universal set of 'Christian' character traits. They recommend to Christian educators a character framework that 'based on God's Word, the love of Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit would serve as the appropriate foundation for Christian character development, which is central to the mission of the Christian school'. (p. 172-3). They argue that 'it would seem more appropriate for Christian educators to continue their focus of any character education and spiritual formation interventions on the central example of Christ and

biblical standards. To contextualize these, a comprehensive approach to character and moral education should focus on the influence of the learning community and provide opportunities for pupils to become actively engaged in their own character formation.' (p. 178).

→ **To what extent should 'character' development guided by Christian school leaders have an explicitly Christian focus?**

2.4.4 Dignity

Human dignity, from a biblical perspective, can be grounded in the *Imago Dei*; the Bible's claim that human beings are made in the image of God. It is only by virtue of this identity that humans have special dignity, worth, and value. It can only survive if we affirm that every single human being, at every stage of development, regardless of intellect or ability, is a person bearing God's image. A secular vision for human dignity may have less to offer because if we are not made by God, in his image, there is no essential dignity due to us. The academic concept of human dignity is problematic because 'no widely accepted universal definition of human dignity exists' (Tapola, 2011: 1245)

A secular ethic has brought us 'personhood theory'; a functionalist view that argues that personhood requires certain intellectual capacities. Peter Singer, ethicist with an ethical theory described as 'interest utilitarianism' uses personhood theory to make the claim that 'Human new-born infants, because they are not persons, do not have a right to life and can be killed up until (at least) a month after birth' (Camosy, 2008: 581).

The Church of England's *Vision for Education* document cites the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights as a 'global agreement on the worth of each person' (p. 7) that is now almost universally acknowledged. In *Human Dignity and Education: A Protestant view*, Schwietzer highlights the important distinction between human dignity

as human rights, and the origin of human dignity from the perspective of Protestant theology

...the foundational reference is not to human rights as the basis of this dignity. Instead, human dignity is itself seen as founded in the human's likeness of God, in the sense of Genesis 1:26f. In other words, this dignity is the special gift from God who created the humans as special beings in God's own likeness. Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (KJV). Human rights then are considered the outgrowth of this biblical understanding.

(Schweitzer 2016: 1)

He points out that to the reformer Martin Luther, ideas of dignity were not at the root of the need for education; education could not restore sinful man to his original likeness of God. To him, education was more about preventing negative consequence (to individuals as well as to society) of sin; it was about worldly governance. Schweitzer identifies two Protestant thinkers (Melancthon and Comenius) for whom the likeness of God was 'one of their decisive starting points in education' (p. 2).

Schweitzer argues that 'a Protestant understanding of education can be of importance beyond theology and the church as well' (p. 4) and significantly for this study that:

Secularisation and, even more, cultural and religious pluralisation are working against religious influences on education altogether. Religions are often considered divisive and as a topic that is better left to the private realm. Consequently, there is a growing need for Protestantism – as well as for other denominations and religions – to demonstrate the plausibility of their educational views beyond their own membership.

(Schweitzer 2016: 4)

An *Academic Search Complete* search for 'human dignity' and 'education' and 'school' (last 10 years' worth of scholarly papers) returned 140 mentions. Many of these were not relevant (a large number focused on nursing and/or medicine, or social work; several were focused on 'social justice').

17 papers were considered potentially relevant to give a flavour of the state of the literature. Research here is largely conceptual with some small-scale empirical (quantitative) studies.

A number focused on inclusion and/or children with special educational needs:

- *Evaluation of Methodology and Strategies Used by Inclusive Education Resource Teachers to Teach Children with Special Needs* (Sekhri, 2018) - empirical evaluation (66 Indian primary schools).
- *Looking Backward and Framing the Future for Parents' Aspiration for Their Children with Disabilities* (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2015) - discussion on policy / practice in the US based on authors' personal experience and review of literature.
- *Protecting the Rights of Pupils with Autism when Meeting the Challenge of Behaviour* (Hodge, 2015) - English focused piece based on author's experience and review of literature.
- *Putting Nussbaum's Capability Approach to Work: Re-visiting inclusion* (Hedge & MacKenzie, 2012) - conceptual / theoretical study using existing framework applied to real situation in Scotland.
- *The Awareness of Primary Caregivers in South Africa of the Human Rights of their Children with Intellectual Disabilities* (Huus et al., 2016) - empirical study surveying 219 primary caregivers in urban and rural areas in South Africa.
- *The Capabilities of People with Cognitive Disabilities* (Nussbaum, 2009) - analysis of the legal situation using three real types of cases;

argument about how subjects under study can be held equal under the (US) law.

- *The Right to Inclusive Education of Persons with Disabilities: The policy and practice implications* (Chowdhury, 2011) – a review of the world-wide policy literature examining the evolution and recognition of the right to inclusive education for persons with disabilities.

A number were written about Catholic education contexts:

- *A Human Dignity and the Catholic University: A vision* (Reimers, 2010) - conceptual essay based on a Vatican document.
- *Examining Teachers' Self-Described Responses to Student Behaviour Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching Principles* (Mucci, 2015) - Empirical study using in-depth interviews with 7 secondary Catholic school teachers (US).
- *The Grammar of Catholic Schooling and Radically "Catholic" Schools* (Scanlan, 2008) - Empirical study - qualitative study of three Catholic elementary schools (US).

In terms of teaching for dignity:

- *Hidden Curriculum on Gaining the Value of Respect for Human Dignity: A qualitative study in two elemental schools in Adana* (Sari & Doğanay, 2009) - Empirical, qualitative research using observation and interviews at two elementary schools (Turkey)
- *Respect in Education* (Giesinger, 2012b) - conceptual paper responding to existing debate, arguing that 'to respect children is to treat them in a way that enables them to see themselves as persons endowed with dignity; that is, as having the equal standing to make claims on others' (p. 100).

In terms of defining Human Dignity:

- *Human Dignity within Teacher Education: A matter of individualism, competitiveness, and strategic rationality* (Tapola, 2011) - Conceptual study of Swedish teacher education to understand how 'human dignity' is defined.
- *Kant on Dignity and Education* (Giesinger, 2012a) - conceptual paper based on the work of Kant.

Humanist perspective:

- *Educating Citizens for Humanism: Nussbaum and the education crisis* (Duarte, 2016)- conceptual paper critical exploration of Nussbaum's ideas.

Social Justice perspective:

- Book reviews of: *Human Rights and Schooling: An ethical framework for teaching for social justice*; and *Restoring dignity in public schools: human rights education in action* (Flowers, 2017) - Book reviews of two US-centric books on social justice.
- *Social Justice Praxis in Education: Towards sustainable management strategies* (van Deventer, van der Westhuizen, & Potgieter, 2015) - An empirical study of 14 principals using an appreciative inquiry method (South Africa.)

The term 'social justice' is common in today's culture. To some, its ideals are simply about tackling the root causes of poverty and reducing systemic disadvantage (for example, the Centre for Social Justice, a think-tank established in 2004 to 'put social justice at the heart of British politics'¹³).

Yet approaches to social justice can move into identity politics and the assignment of collective

¹³ See <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/>

guilt assigned to particular groups. There is tension between Christians on the issue of social justice because it is based in sociological theories that are, some have argued, incompatible with Christian beliefs.

Approaches to social justice can be lacking from a biblical perspective, because they fail to address the issue of the *Imago Dei*. The *Statement on Social Justice & the Gospel*¹⁴ gives one, debated, perspective, that Christian leaders may wish to consider. Christian school leaders need to consider

the degree to which it is appropriate to borrow values from secular culture when defining what they mean by 'human dignity'.

→ **How might a biblical perspective on dignity influence Christian school leaders' thoughts about leading and educating, and how might this contribute to human flourishing?**

2.5 School Effectiveness research

This is a vast body of research and much broader than this review. The language of 'school effectiveness' is relevant because of its focus on 'what works' in terms of schools meeting their own objectives.

In a 2004 edition of the *Journal of Research in Christian Education* in a meta-analytic piece on *Philosophical Criteria for Assessing the Effectiveness of a Christian School* the authors (Van der Walt & Zecha) found that 'very little research has been done with respect to the effectiveness of Christian schools' (p. 173). Not only this but 'none of the researchers we studied deemed it worthwhile to approach the problem from a Christian (or biblical) perspective.' (p. 170).

At that time, they found school effectiveness as a concept to have no consistent definition. In their paper, school effectiveness is used to refer to 'the extent to which the school has met its goals or objectives, among others through guiding and enabling the learners to attain or master the desired dispositions'.

Borrowing an earlier definition from van Dyk, the authors designate the title 'Christian school' for a

place 'where Christian educators refuse to be satisfied with providing only factual knowledge and marketable skills. Rather, teachers in a Christian school seek to transform all activities and studies into an expression of biblical wisdom, training the pupils to walk as disciples of Jesus Christ' (p. 172). Although this could be said of independent Christian schools in the UK, complicating factors with Church of England schools (for example, their state funding, recruitment practices for teachers, parental motivations for school selection etc.) mean that we should recognise the limitations regarding transferability from Van der Walt and Zecha's paper into the Church of England context.

Nevertheless, the authors' search for a model of school effectiveness that could be applied to Christian schools is of use to us. They settled on a model from Heneveld and added a number of 'key factors from a reformational perspective' (p. 175). Their additions to Heneveld's (1994) model are indicated in bold. Box 5.0 'student outcomes' is clearly relevant, as is the link from 2.1 'effective leadership'.

¹⁴ Available at <https://statementonsocialjustice.com/>

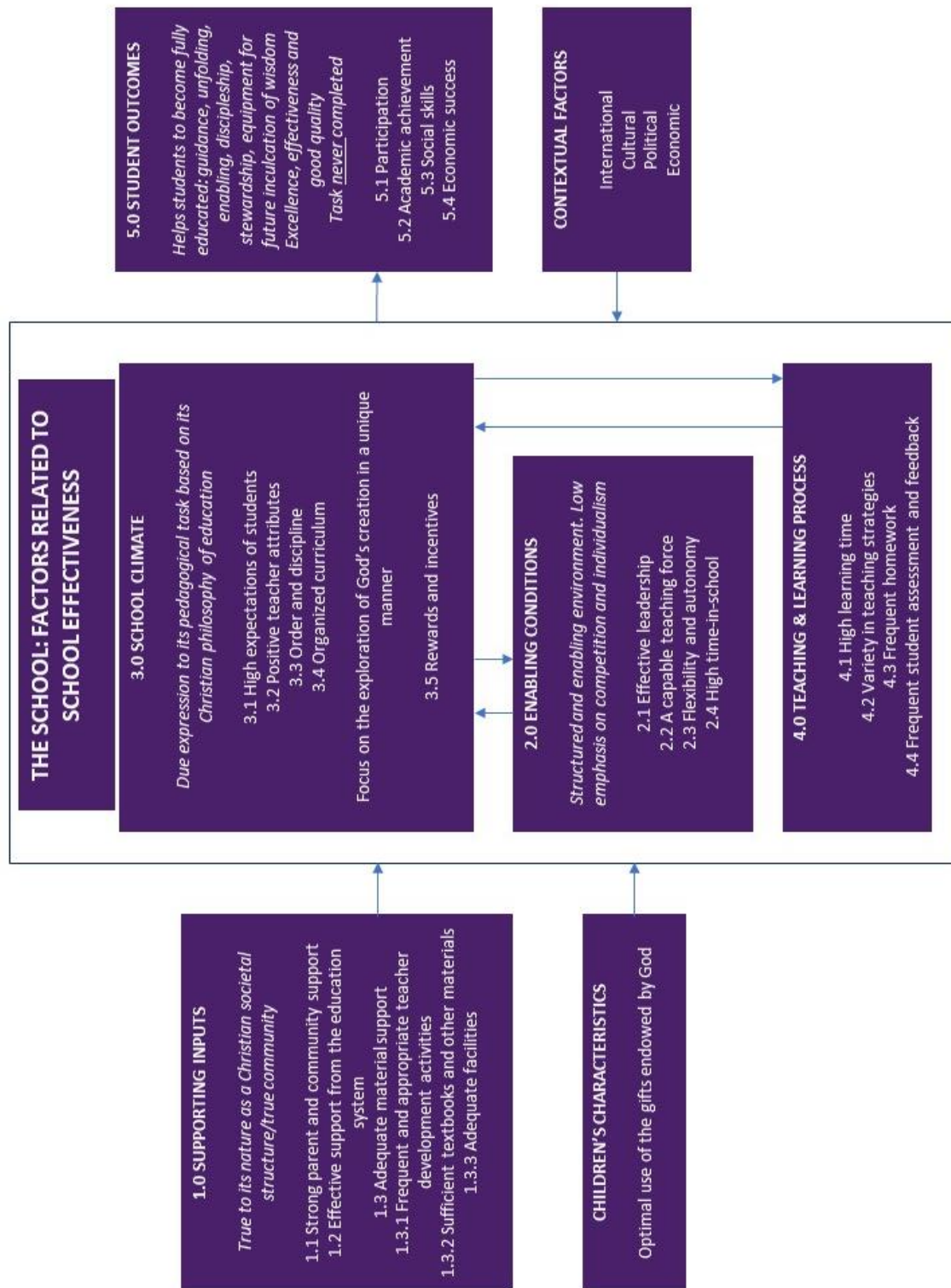


Figure 3 Van der Walt and Zecha's 2004 framework of school factors related to effectiveness – adapted from Heneveld (1994)

Their additions recognise, as far as possible, 'the purpose, nature and context of Christian schools' (p. 177) and take a 'philosophical-pedagogical'

view rather than being the result of empirical testing of 'effective' schools (p. 190).

The authors believe that there are 'key factors which are essential to the effective Christian school' (p. 178), whose 'core task' is 'education in both the narrow sense of teaching and learning, and the broader sense of *paideia* (well-rounded educatedness)' (p. 178). This concept of *paideia* bears strong resemblance to notions of 'flourishing' and of 'life in all its fullness'.

The key factors are:

1. An effective Christian school is true to its nature as a Christian societal structure and community. The 'societal structure' in mind here is one that is free from the control of the state and of parents but also, 'like all societal structures has a pedagogical task'. The authors describe this task as:

Developing a Christian mind through teaching and learning is a matter of teaching students to think in accord with a coherent, Scripturally-based worldview. Christian educators should undertake to give their students a Christian perspective, based on God's revelation on all curricular topics. The chief task of the school is the cultivation of distinctively Christian ways of thinking about reality. In doing this, the school shapes the way the students live, make decisions and choose vocations.

(Van de Walt & Zecha 2004: 178-9)

2. The effective Christian school makes optimal use of the gifts that students have been endowed with by God.

This second 'key factor' (p178) relates to notions of flourishing and wholeness. In the context in which the authors are writing, the Christian school 'will, therefore, avoid a uniform curriculum that puts all the students through the same courses of study, employing common learning strategies and assessment instruments, since this will leave many valuable student gifts effectively buried. (p180).

3 An effective Christian school gives due expression to its pedagogical task, based on its Christian philosophy of education.

In the context of a Christian school's 'overall aim' being 'to help and guide the students to be and become responsible disciples of Jesus Christ' (p. 180), successful schools will recognise the 'formative task' they have in 'pointing [learners] in a certain direction as they develop their insights and potential' (p. 180).

4 An effective Christian school focuses on the exploration of God's creation in a unique manner.

While it 'presents the facts that science has uncovered, it sees them as revelatory of God and as channels for service and communion with him' teaching 'concepts and skills as means to an end, and not as ends in themselves.' (p. 181).

5 An effective Christian school provides a structured and enabling environment.

Students need to be 'living out of a Christian worldview' in the classroom. (p. 182)

6 An effective Christian school does not emphasize competition and individualism in a highly competitive world.

7 An effective Christian school helps students to become fully educated in a Scriptural sense of the word.

8 The teachers working in an effective Christian school strive for the inculcation of wisdom in their learners.

9 An effective Christian school strives for academic excellence, effectiveness and good quality as defined in accordance with biblical norms

10 The effective Christian school realizes that its stewardship task is never completed.

3. How strong is the evidence base?

This literature scan bore in mind three broad questions, and arrived at many more:

- **What is Christian leadership in schools? What does it look like? Who are the main thinkers? How widespread is it in England?**

In answering this question, we offer an overview of the literature, summarising key lines of thought and identifying key thinkers, key journals and key academic centres.

- **What do we know about what ‘works’ in Christian leadership?**

Here we have considered whether there is evidence that Christian leadership in schools as defined above ‘works’, that is to

say whether it ‘delivers’ its intended outcomes such as human flourishing, life in all its fullness and the common good or ‘character’ as defined by the Church of England.

- **How strong is the evidence base for Christian school leadership more generally, both theoretically and empirically?**

We begin by weighing the evidence base for Christian leadership in schools and then offer some evaluative comments as to its extent, its areas of focus, the quality of existing research, concluding by describing any gaps in our understanding.

Our initial scan of the literature revealed a paucity of research:

- a thin theoretical base;
- very few robust models;
- a few journals;
- no random controlled trials (which is ethically problematic in education anyway);
- few meta-analyses;
- no longitudinal studies;
- some intervention studies (e.g. in the area of character).

We looked at approximately 120 relevant pieces of evidence as follows:

Source of evidence	Number of pieces of evidence
Book / paper reviews	13
Character organisations	4
Christian education organisations	2
Conceptual papers	36
Empirical studies	20
Literature reviews	9
Meta-analytical papers	8
Practitioner or expert opinion paper/book	19
Reports	4
Research centres	4
Thesis	2

3.1 Journals

A number of journals provided source material for this study. The most frequently used were:

- Christian Higher Education
- Education and Urban Society
- Evangelical Review of Theology
- International Journal of Christianity & Education
- International Journal of Educational Research
- Journal of Anglican Studies
- Journal of Applied Christian Leadership
- Journal of Beliefs & Values
- Journal of Business Ethics
- Journal of Moral Education

- Journal of Moral Theology
- Journal of Research on Christian Education
- Journal of School Leadership
- Principal Leadership
- The Journal of Negro Education
- The Journal of Youth Ministry
- Themelios.

3.2 Strength of the evidence

3.2.1 Models of leadership

There is a large body of literature concerning the various models of leadership that might speak to Christian leaders, but little specific to guide their practice.

Van der Walt & Zecha's (2004) framework of school factors related to effectiveness is the only framework we found that addresses this from a Christian perspective.

3.2.2 Leadership for flourishing

There is very little literature that speaks to Christian leaders about what 'flourishing' means and how they might bring it about.

3.2.3 Leadership for wisdom

There is very little literature that speaks to how Christian leaders might educate for wisdom. The necessity of doing so is clear, but practically speaking there is a dearth of information.

3.2.4 Leadership for hope

Leadership for hope is not unexpectedly an under-researched area. The message of the gospel offers a clear hope, but how leaders might reflect this in everything they do is not explicitly researched.

3.2.5 Leadership for community

Notions of leadership for character (a close proxy to community in its treatment of individuals in relation to their neighbours) are well researched, particularly from a secular perspective.

Biblical treatment of the importance of character, and what right interactions with our neighbour look like, is clear. Research translating this into practice in schools does not appear to be in abundance.

3.2.6 Leadership for dignity

There is a small- to medium-sized literature on human dignity. Its meaning outside of a biblical definition is contested, however. Debates about dignity can risk being politicized and ideological. Our dignity as image-bearers of the Creator is fundamental to our understanding of what it means to be human. There is a lack of helpful literature exploring how leaders might incorporate this truth into their practice.

Appendix 1 – Questions and observations arising from the initial review at a glance

- 1) How might the Church of England find a coherent and philosophical / theological balance between its emphasis on flourishing for all, and the radical and exclusive truth claims of Jesus about his identity as God, and as the only way to know God the Father?
- 2) How can Church of England's schools retain their inclusivity but yet hold truth at the core that people want to be a part of? How can the Church of England fulfil its mission and vision for education in a way that retains biblical integrity?
- 3) How might we think about developing processes and practices of professionalisation of teachers and leaders that are first and foremost about values?
- 4) How best can the Christian faith and identity of those exercising leadership in schools be developed so that they see themselves as 'being' the church in their educational institutions
- 5) There may be more than one viewpoint on a philosophy of Christian education, and it may help if these are brought to light if the term 'Christian leadership' is to be given real meaning.
- 6) To adopt a rigorous and useful approach to research, it will be important to delve deeply and consider the philosophies that underpin our thinking about purpose and practice of Christian leadership.
- 7) Examples of questions from stakeholders:
 - a. What is theological literacy?
 - b. What are the distinctive elements of Christian leadership in church schools?
 - c. What do we mean by theological vision?
 - d. What is the added value of the faith/Christian dimension of a MAT?
 - e. What does it mean for a headteacher to think in a theological way?

- 8) How can the Church of England develop an approach to pedagogy that explores the integration of faith and learning across the full range of a school's teaching?
- 9) As a broad church incorporating views from Anglo-Catholic, evangelical and liberal traditions, how can Christian leaders maintain integrity in their own beliefs when they may have their own views on what constitutes 'flourishing'?
- 10) To what extent is Christian leadership about ensuring certain values are foregrounded in school life?
- 11) How might tensions arising from a dual inspection system – especially with regard to leadership – be further explored?
- 12) To what extent ought Christian headteachers be expected to understand the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith rather than requiring space to develop such an understanding 'on the job'?
- 13) It will be necessary to define what 'effective Christian leadership' means before asking 'what works'?
- 14) Research might identify the degree to which the 'servant leadership' concept is relevant in school leadership.
- 15) How appropriate and/or helpful might the role of leaders in 'disciplining' young people be?
- 16) To what degree do school leaders' own beliefs need to be explicit and shared before a school can truly be regarded as a faith 'community'?
- 17) When we ask 'what works' in Christian school leadership, questions might be:
 - a. What do we mean by what 'works'; how can we measure, track, or assess success?
 - b. In terms of interventions or practices that lead to desired outcomes, how much evaluation is there; how good are those evaluations?
 - c. Are we concerned with what works for 'flourishing' in general; or other desired outcomes?
 - d. To what degree can we expect all people to flourish outside of a biblical perspective on the purpose of human life?
 - e. What is a gospel-centred, biblical, perspective on flourishing and how can/should this be integrated into/inform school values, lesson content, and teacher development etc?
 - f. If you know what 'biblical leadership' looks like, how can you evaluate it?
- 18) The Church of England may wish to consider the question of what is meant by 'flourishing' outside of God's design and purposes. It might be helpful to take a systematic theological perspective to develop a clear rationale for explaining what is meant by 'flourishing' in a biblical sense.
- 19) How might Christian school leaders think about incorporating philosophically-driven approaches into school in a way that develops children's ability to consider issues of spirituality?
- 20) In terms of the importance of biblical wisdom: how much of the 'wisdom' leaders teach should come directly from the Bible?
- 21) What are the implications of a biblical understanding of wisdom for the way it is taught in schools?

- 22) Do Christian leaders need to think about the contrasting role of secular and Christian education when guiding school values and policies?
- 23) How explicit should leaders be about helping individuals 'recognize where it comes from'?
- 24) To what extent should 'character' development guided by Christian school leaders have an explicitly Christian focus?
- 25) How might a biblical perspective influence Christian school leaders' thoughts about leading and educating, and how might this contribute to human flourishing?

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