

Education team help to create academies

OUR education team supports church schools in their pursuit of excellence – and one new way of doing so in 2011 was exploring academy status.

The team works across both Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses and there are now three C of E primary academies and two secondary academies in that area – with another six primaries actively working through the process.

Director of education Tony Blackshaw said: “The Academies Act 2010 signalled the beginning of a root and branch change to the English education system.

“In many ways it is the greatest change in the organisation of schools since 1944, if not 1870.”

One school that has been grateful for the support of our education officers is Oak Meadow C of E Primary in Fareham, which started the process in late 2011. It should make the change to academy status this September.

Headteacher Jane Hoggarth said: “The diocesan director of education has been very supportive and helpful to Oak Meadow as we embark on the exciting journey to academy status.

“The diocesan team have been at the end of a phone when we have had questions and have done their best to find out the answers speedily when they were unsure.

“As a sponsored academy, the direction and knowledge of the project manager and his team has been instrumental in enabling us to feel fully involved and consulted in the process.

“I am not sure what we would have done without them to guide us on this journey.”

Among the other strategic priorities for the six-strong team of full-time officers is to support the appointment of headteachers and deputy heads.

A total of 17 schools had changes of head during 2011



Director of education Tony Blackshaw with Oak Meadow's headteacher Jane Hoggarth and pupils

and each appointment takes up to five days of an adviser's time.

Staff also support cluster groups of headteachers and encourage them to go through extra training. Governors are also given training – more than 150 foundation governors attended 15 different training events in the year.

The team also supports church schools through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) process, which checks their commitment to a Christian ethos. Of the 31 inspections in 2011, 20 schools were graded ‘outstanding’.

A dedicated officer also supports school building projects, securing almost £3m of

The team also encouraged parishes to engage with local schools, and promoted the affiliation scheme – 11 non-church schools are now affiliated to their parish and diocese.

The RE adviser retired in July 2010 and a new team member was appointed in September 2011 to support church school improvement and effectiveness.

In the meantime, Judith Lowndes, RE adviser for HIAS, was employed to run two series of six meetings to support the teaching of RE in church schools. Those attending were very positive about the content of those meetings.

A review of chaplaincy to Further Education colleges has

taken place, and individual chaplains sup-

ported where they exist. But the major challenge is to recruit new chaplains, as most posts are voluntary.

The team also work collaboratively with education authorities.

Officers attended more than 100 such meetings, many of which were on the Isle of Wight, and covered the continuing school reorganisation on the island.

And school leavers days were held in our cathedral and at Newport Minster for those pupils moving on. These services were supported by the bishop and archdeacons.

Vital project will safeguard parish properties and land

IT was an important project that helped to safeguard parish property for the future.

During 2011, diocesan special project officer Mark Williams ensured all Church land in our diocese was registered with the Land Registry. This means we will be clear about ownership and boundaries and avoid potential disputes.

In total 33 pieces of glebe land, 48 schools, 169 churches, 134 vicarages, 88 church halls, 24 parish properties and 13 churchyards were registered for the first time.

In Wootton, this meant registering an open copse opposite St Edmund's Church to ensure it is not lost. And as part of that process we also discovered some land in Chale that was originally given to Wootton parish.

David Bennison from Wootton described the project as “one of the best exercises of its kind I've seen.”

Mark was taken on partly because he had previously been employed by the Land Registry. And employing him to conduct the project in-house is thought to have saved the diocese and parishes more than £150,000 in land registry and other legal fees.

“The land opposite St Edmund's was given to us in the 1940s so it



Archivist Doreen Gazey at St Edmund's, Wootton, with the copse land visible behind the churchyard

wouldn't be built on, as it's too close to the church. Our archivist Doreen Gazey found evidence that it had been given to us and we were there-

fore able to register it.

“There were also some parcels of land in Chale Green that were given

to us, where Spanners Close was built. Mark checked and there is a couple of acres remaining of that land. It's good to get it registered as it helps us to resist any encroachment.

“Not only was it a good project to do, but Mark was the ideal person to do it because he has the background technical knowl-

edge and the knowledge of the Church. I've heard nothing but praise for him.”

On the mainland, one of the other areas of land registered for the first time was the car park outside St Simon's Church in Southsea.

The vicar, the Rev Matthew Holland, said: “We are grateful to the initiative of the diocese and to the



Mark Williams working on registering land

work of Mark Williams who has seen to it that a valuable piece of real estate, namely St Simon's church car park, is now correctly registered.”

Mark was working as part of our Mission and Resources section, which deals with finances, property, IT, safeguarding and alterations to church buildings.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) met 10 times in 2011 and looked at 86 new suggestions for alterations. Of these new cases, 24 were straightforward enough to be approved without discussion, while 61 involved faculty applications. It generally takes three to four months to get from an application to the DAC to receiving faculty approval for alterations.

The property department, which manages and maintains vicarages, glebe land and free-filled all the urgent repairs suggested in five-yearly inspections. That included removing one dangerous tall chimney, replacing two roofs and making huge energy efficiency savings to several vicarages by and replacing old boilers and leaky windows.

During 2011, the Investment Advisory Group supported the Diocesan Secretary's proposal to spend £150,000 on installing solar panels. Ecotricity was awarded the contract and installed 14 such solar systems in vicarages and other properties. Over the 25-year lifespan of the installations, the diocese should not only recoup its investment, but profit by £280,000 by selling electricity back to the National Grid.

And during the year a total of 1,011 CRB checks were carried out by our safeguarding team. Every parish had a child protection and vulnerable adult protection representative in place, and seven training events attracted a total of 144 people.

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relevant government funding, and advising schools on how to spend another £4.3m of funding most effectively. He was also involved in the building of one new school – St Francis Primary in Ventnor.

Officers were also involved in admission appeals. Hearings were arranged and conducted for 56 cases, and training for the 70 current appeal panel members was also organised. New regulations were due to come into force this February which would involve further training.

Helping parishes to re-set mission priorities



Canon Peter Jones with architecture students at St Faith's, Havant, on the Rapid Parish Development Programme

HELPING parishes to make the most of their buildings, assets and resources has been a key part of the work of our Mission and Society section.

Its Rapid Parish Development Programme expanded into Hart Plain, Bridgemary and Liss parishes – as well as part of the Truro diocese and three areas of the Winchester diocese – in 2011.

The programme invites congregation members to think strategically about the needs of the parish and their mission priorities – and then to reorganise buildings, resources or assets to achieve them.

In St Matthew's, Bridgemary, for instance, a club for dads and their children was suggested because a need was recognised for divorced or separated fathers who might need

somewhere to go with their children on a Saturday.

Our Council for Social Responsibility (CSR) also runs the Good Neighbour Support Service, which received renewed funding from Hampshire County Council and NHS Hampshire in 2011, despite cuts to local budgets.

Such groups provided 108,156 neighbourly tasks via 122 groups in 2010-11, with a total of 3,599 volunteers involved overall.

After a year of discussion, the Joint Venture Social Enterprise was set up as a new business in partnership with the Parity Trust, a community bank. It offers project management and innovative solutions to churches, charities and community groups.

Our CSR was incorporated as a

separate charity from 1 January 2012, and aims to be financially sustainable by the end of this year. It also took 12 people to the Kaospilots School in Denmark, for training in leadership and creativity.

During 2011, communications continued to develop. The Pompey Chimes celebrated 100 editions, the diocesan website attracted up to 8,000 visitors each month, and 30

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parish websites were hosted on diocesan webspace.

A social media strategy was developed – with a diocesan Facebook page, Twitter stream and Youtube channel now active.

The highlight for our Inter-Diocesan West Africa Link (IDWAL) in 2011 was the bishop's

visit to Ghana in October. It showed our Ghanaian partners how seriously we treat the link. Another 25 people made visits to Ghana.

Diocesan advisers were active in the areas of urban ministry, rural affairs, disability, ecumenism, workplace chaplaincy and helping those who are deaf and hard of hearing.

And our environment adviser helped parishes explore the installation of photovoltaic cells on 12 parsonages as a way of parishes making a profit from the feed-in tariff.

Canon Nick Ralph, Head of Mission and Society, said: “The work of Mission and Society is exceptionally diverse.

“We all aim to serve God in different ways, and to do so in a way which honours our faith, commends God's love and upholds his justice.”