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'Learning to live and love like Jesus'

Catholic Independent Schools and the Common Good

May 2020



“ Let education be a place of encounter and communal endeavour where we learn to be society and where society learns to be a supportive society. We have to learn new ways to build the human city.”

Pope Francis

‘Learning to live and love like Jesus’

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Foreword

‘Learning to live and love like Jesus’ is the outcome of an initial conversation with the Catholic Independent Schools’ Conference (CISC) Committee and my collaborators at Reed Brand Communication: Carolyn Reed, Justin Webster and Katie Cardona. Since being appointed to the role of General Secretary of CISC in October 2018, I have visited many schools and been both impressed and moved by the uncompromising manner in which the Catholic identity of the school is lived out and articulated by pupils and staff. ‘Learning to Live and Love Like Jesus’ is an attempt to evidence what impact this has on the life of a school, as well as the communities it is a part of, and to acknowledge and celebrate this.

I am extremely grateful to Reed Brand for their collaboration on the survey, the subsequent data collection and their presentation of headline outcomes at the CISC Conference ‘The Pearl of Great Price’, in Glasgow in January 2020.

I would also like to thank the CISC Committee for their support and leadership at what is a challenging time for Catholic Independent Schools.

Finally, I would like to thank the schools for their time and effort in completing the survey with such thought and detail.

All Hallows Preparatory School	Rydes Hill Preparatory School and Nursery
Barlborough Hall School	St. Aloysius College
Beaulieu Convent School	St. Augustine’s Priory
Beechwood Sacred Heart School	St. Columba’s College
Chavagnes International College	St. Edmund’s College
Donhead Preparatory School	St. George’s Junior School
Grace Dieu Manor School	St. George’s College
Kilgraston School	St. Mary’s School, Cambridge
Mayfield School	St. Pius X Catholic Preparatory School
More House School, Frensham	St. Teresa’s, Effingham
Our Lady’s Abingdon Senior School	St. Vincent’s Schools for Sensory Impairment
Prior Park College	Salesian College
Ratcliffe College Preparatory School	The Towers School
Ratcliffe College	

Their words convey the dedication, commitment, passion and great love they have for their work and more than anything show what a ‘pearl of great price’ Catholic education is for the contemporary Church.

Dr Maureen Glackin
General Secretary, CISC

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“Every part of that education has a connection with every other part. If it does not all combine to continue to convey some general view of life it is not an education at all.”

Chesterton, 1959:167

Introduction

Catholic education is never about ‘just one thing’. Its very nature embodies a vision in which academic learning is achieved within a context where all are brought to an awareness of the world and a deep respect for the person as a reflection of God through the witness and values of Christ. This distinctive pedagogy is experienced not merely through didactic education but through inference, implication, intent, atmosphere and ethos. *Charism*, perhaps, best describes this: ‘a gift from God for the church and the world, given as different ways of living out the Gospel..... [in] the spirit of the community’ (Klapheke, 2018:1).

The community within Catholic schools is an inclusive and diverse one. The annual census of Catholic schools by the Catholic Education Service of England and Wales (CES, 2019) attests to this, showing an increasing number of pupils of other faiths and life perspectives choosing to be educated within this distinctive charism year on year. This is most evident in Catholic Independent Schools where the percentage of Catholic pupils is 33.6% (CES, 2019:17). With this in mind, the charism of the school becomes ever more important as a signifier of its commitment to nurture pupils in this vision. For some this is rooted in a life of faith, for all it is rooted in the charism of the school and realised through a vibrant and integrated curriculum which allows pupils not only to achieve their academic potential but also develop a keen awareness of and commitment to social responsibility. The latter, is at the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching in the concept of the ‘Common Good’, ‘the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily’ (Gaudium et Spes, 1965:n26). Therefore, working towards the Common Good means striving to attain the greatest good for all people. Within Catholic schools, the imperative for this is borne from the Gospel commandment that we love our neighbours as ourselves (Mk, 12:31; Matt, 22:39) and is epitomised in the way that every person in the school community interacts with each other: ‘Tolerance, respect and love are taught by celebrating differences in language, religion and culture as well as the way in which we speak to each other. Daily, we come together in prayer to thank God for the opportunities we have and to ask for his forgiveness. Charitable deeds are encouraged, whether simple acts of kindness towards one another or giving up time in the service of others or raising funds for good causes’ (SR). This being the case, how is it realised? How is it evidenced? What is its impact?

In order to find answers to these questions and to come to a fuller understanding of how this call to service in the service of others is realised within Catholic independent schools, a survey was prepared by Reed Brand Communication and sent to all member schools of the Catholic Independent Schools’ Conference (CISC). In total there are 123 member schools, including a number of associate international schools, and non-maintained

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special schools. 27 schools responded, a 22% return rate, of which 13 were Senior Schools and Colleges (including 1 international school), hereafter referred to collectively as Senior Schools, 10 were Prep Schools (Primary), and 4 were ‘All Through’ Schools, including 2 Special Schools.

The survey posed the following questions:

1. What charitable causes has your school supported in the last year?
2. How much money has been raised for these causes in year or others over the last three?
3. Do you work with maintained schools?
4. Do you support local business?
5. Does your school take part in any other socially responsible enterprises?
6. How are the values of your school epitomised in action?
7. What is the contribution of your school to the common good and its impact?

What follows is an exploration of the collective and individual contributions that Catholic Independent Schools make in the call to serve the Common Good, with each section focusing upon a particular question or group of questions. What emerges is a vibrant narrative in which the schools speak for themselves (SR denotes a school response), eloquently articulating their passionate and authentic commitment to social justice within a lived experience of contemporary Catholic education in which all learn to live and love like Jesus.

What charitable causes has your school supported in the last year?

Collectively, the schools had worked with well over 100 international, national and local charities of which approximately 25% were Catholic or Christian organisations. The single most frequently supported charity was CAFOD, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development with 23 schools - 85% - engaging in fund-raising for them, which, considering one of the schools that responded was an international school and two were Scottish, indicates the manner in which the work of CAFOD is fully integrated into the pastoral life of Catholic schooling in England and Wales. It should be noted that the Scottish and international schools were all supporters of their equivalent organisations, namely SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund) and Secours Catholique. The other single named charities that reap significant levels of commitment from the schools are: Mary’s Meals (10 schools: 37%); HCPT Pilgrimage Trust (9 schools: 33%); The British Legion (8 schools: 30%). Beyond this, it is, perhaps, more helpful to cluster charities thematically in order to understand what charitable causes the schools support.

The largest single group to benefit from the support of CISC schools is local charities. 66 local charities – approximately 2.5 per school – are supported on an ongoing basis by the school within their local community. The nature of these charities is very broad but they mostly address a specific medical or social issue within the local landscape, for example Merton Young Carers, St Mary’s Church House Group, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance and local food banks. Following on from this, charities linked with the schools’ founding order or mission and serving local parishes are the next largest thematic group with 37 different initiatives actively supported by schools. Many of these have an international link and are long-term projects focusing on educational and healthcare needs of communities with which the schools have links. These are substantial and ongoing commitments which are supported both through fundraising and practical engagement from staff

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and pupils at the school, for example: Rosminian Lesotho, Jesuit Missions, Jesuit Refugees, The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Charity, St Joseph’s African Aid, Sisters of Charity AIDS Hospice, Congregation of Jesus Zimbabwe Mbizo School Project. The support given to these charitable endeavours is significant, not only in financial capital but also in spiritual capital. The relationships that exist between the communities, united by a shared mission and charism, build a tangible union that spreads far beyond the walls of the schools, rooting the school communities within the Kingdom of God as much as that of any temporal realm.

This strong commitment and connection with charities that are overtly Catholic or Christian, or those that have been inspired by a Catholic/Christian impulse, extends further beyond those that have a ‘family’ connection, to coin a phrase, with charities like The Cardinal Hume Centre, Saint Vincent de Paul Society, LEPRa and Emmaus being regular recipients of the schools’ commitment.

Moving beyond the more obviously faith-centred or faith founded charities, the next largest thematic groupings are medically focussed. With one in two people contracting cancer, no school is spared the effects of the disease, therefore it is, perhaps, not surprising that 28 cancer charities receive support from the schools as well as 11 hospices, providing palliative care for the terminally ill. Additionally, the schools also support a large number of individual charities that focus on various aspects of health, disability and well-being. In total this accounts for 24 different charities, Riding for the Disabled, Guide Dogs Association, Operation Smile, BLISS, Anthony Nolan, CRUSE, MIND, Alzheimer’s Society and British Dyslexia Association, to name a few.

It is evident that the schools are an important source of support for a wide range of charities however, how much do they raise for their charities and what is the wider impact of this on the pupils? How meaningful is the engagement?

How much money has been raised for these causes over the last three years?

In total, the 27 schools have raised almost £1 million pounds over the last three years for their charitable causes. The exact total is £953,500, with an average annual fundraising total of £317,833. The breakdown by school type can be seen below (fig.1)

Money raised for charitable causes over the last three years (fig.1.)

Type of School	3 year total	Average individual school fundraising over 3 years	Average annual individual school fundraising
Prep	£240,500	£26,730	£8,910
All through	£163,000	£33,200	£8,300
Senior	£550,000	£42,307	£14,102

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Individual school contributions over the three years ranged from £3000 - £100,000 with the largest sum, perhaps surprisingly, being raised by a prep school. The overall spread of fundraising over the three years by type of school can be seen below (fig. 2).

Level of fundraising by type of school (fig. 2.)

Type of School	£0 - £15k	£16k - £25k	£26k - £50k	£51k - £75k	£76k - £100k
Prep	4	5			1
All through	2	3	4	2	2
Senior		2	1		1

The sums of money involved are not inconsiderable and it is interesting to reflect upon the extent to which certain charities are reliant on this income stream in order to sustain their work. However, what is of equal importance is that the commitment to these charities extends beyond the financial and into the practical and spiritual, becoming embedded in the life of the school as an integrated and authentic commitment.

How are the values of your school epitomised in action?

What is the contribution of your school to the Common Good and its impact?

Responses to the questions of how the schools' values are epitomised in action and the impact of their contribution to the Common Good, not only identify the significance of the wider effect of such fundraising efforts but also the manner in which its very nature is an essential aspect of the life of a Catholic school informing all aspects of its being - curricular, liturgical, spiritual and pastoral. One senior school ensures an integrated approach by linking collective worship thematically with their charitable initiatives: 'All fundraising is linked to Gospel values in the publicity material and backed up by assemblies, making an explicit link between faith and Action'(SR). Another senior school elucidates it more fully, perhaps speaking for many other schools when it says: 'Part of the ethos of [our school] and [its founding order] is to be committed to charitable giving and action. Central to this is educating the whole community to an appreciation of the differing social and economic circumstances in the world, and an engagement in the ways and means of supporting those in some way disadvantaged. In doing so the [school] seeks to fulfil its aim as a Roman Catholic institution whose intention is to share, " an experience of Christian community in which all may grow in faith through worship, mutual support and by responding to the needs of the community at large"' (SR).

Therefore, it is clear that the fundraising is not an end in itself: 'the intention is to both raise funds and awareness, and to be actively involved in direct support of chosen charities so that charitable action is a lived aspect of the principles of responding to need. In this way "we expect each student to develop his own particular talents in pursuit of his God-given vocation.... and readiness to be of service to society"'(SR). How is this achieved? In addition to the thematic collective worship and liturgies previously referred to, the core purpose for the fundraising is 'embedded into the taught curriculum and reinforced with [an] 'enrichment' curriculum"'(SR)in many schools. In terms of the latter this means 'not just giving money but our time and help

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when possible’ (SR). Therefore schools engage in a range of activities within and beyond the gates to ‘develop each and every child’s individual awareness of authentic Gospel values’ (SR). For example: ‘Laudato Si’ days with no paper or electricity; Family Fast Day, the Simple Meal and hunger lunches; systematic programmes for visiting care homes; pen pals to care home residents; helpers on HCPT pilgrimages to Lourdes; sleep outs in support of homeless charities. In addition, the Jesuit schools Arrupe Programme facilitates 10 week placements in a range of settings such as hospices, nursing homes, charities, schools and centres for asylum seekers. At the end of each week students complete a journal, detailing their experiences and reflecting on how this helps them to recognise God’s presence in their lives. In addition, pupils are encouraged by schools to select the charitable causes they wish to support and create and contribute to assemblies and days of reflection alongside this. In this way, schools’ ‘action in the community and for charity is not only a dutiful and faithful response to the Gospel but also develops within pupils and staff the Christian call to service, especially towards those less fortunate than ourselves’ (SR).

Beyond external charitable causes, bursaries and scholarships are also an important way in which Catholic independent schools offer opportunity. Whilst not a detailed focus of this survey, all schools had a programme of pupil support with bursaries for up to 100% of fees and special schools educating a high proportion of state-funded pupils, providing specialist provision unavailable in their areas. In addition, as is evident from the engagement with charities, schools also make a distinct contribution to their local communities both financially and pastorally.

Do you support local business?

Does your school take part in any other socially responsible enterprises?

This question regarding local business support received positive responses from 18 schools (67%), of which 5 (28%) were Prep, 10 (55%) Senior and 3 (17%) ‘All Through’. In looking at the responses there are three main ways in which schools directly support local businesses and the local economy. Firstly, employing people on site such as teachers, administrators, facilities support staff; secondly, sourcing consumables and services, for example books, flowers, food, uniforms, printing, building contractors, stationery. And finally, inviting local businesses to take stalls at Christmas and Summer fairs and allowing them and the community free use of the facilities for local events. Whilst the majority of schools did not attach a figure to their support of the local economy, one senior school stated that in terms of employment and outsourcing it sustains 374 jobs. This is a significant figure and is all the more credible when set alongside the findings of the Independent Schools’ Council (ISC) report *The Impact of Independent Schools on the UK Economy* which states that independent schools contributed £11.6 billion to the UK economy in 2017, generating £3.5 billion of annual tax revenues and supporting 257,000 jobs (ISC, 2018:4-5). In terms of facilities use, examples include schools with pools allowing local swimming clubs to use them and allowing local sports clubs free loan of equipment to prevent them having to hire it. However, the extent to which schools share their facilities more broadly can, perhaps, best be seen through their engagement with local maintained schools which is explored below.

With reference to socially responsible enterprise, 23 schools (85%) said that they did engage in such activities, with the biggest single area of engagement centring upon ecological initiatives. 14 schools (61%) gave examples of the type of activities they lead and participate in, which include: tree planting; recycling and local litter campaigns; plastic-free schools; organic farming; school eco clubs; vintage clothing; Fairtrade tuck shops and

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catering products. The Pope Francis “effect” in terms of *Laudato Si* with its call to interior conversion and a renewal of our relationship with God and each other through a renewal of our relationship with the created world, cannot be underestimated here. It is a perfect example of the integrated approach to education that the schools seek to nurture in their pupils and staff – doing the right deed for the right reason, morally, socially, rationally and spiritually. Its impact and influence can be seen in the fact that, excepting The Holy Bible, it is the most referenced Church document in responses from schools.

In addition to issues regarding climate change and the environment, engagement with socially responsible enterprise in many cases provides schools with opportunities to contribute to existing national charitable infrastructures such as the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Salvation Army. Local engagement centres upon care homes, schools and food banks with one school collecting a record 1.4 tonnes of items for two local food banks. Uniquely, this school also supports the organisation of a half-marathon charity event (8,000 runners), with 100 staff and pupils packing and sorting medals the day before and distributing water, t-shirts and medals on the day itself. The currency of the volunteer is of high worth to all of these initiatives but in addition, they give opportunity for schools to express their values and faith in action. As one school stated: ‘[o]ur values of politesse, douceur, inclusiveness, hospitality and collaboration are strongly evident in our acts of service to charities, our relationships with local schools, and the broader community’. It is this engagement with the broader community, namely the broader educational community, to which I shall finally turn.

Do you work with maintained schools?

In responding to this question, 21 schools (78%) said that they did, consisting of 6 Prep (29%), 11 Senior (52%) and 4 ‘All Through’ (19%). Again, there were three main areas of engagement, namely: chaplaincy, charity and outreach, academic and facilities. Facilities is, perhaps, the most obvious source of collaboration between schools and much of this centres around PE and sport where grounds and facilities are used for training, lessons and events in a diverse number of sports including swimming and National Pool and Lifeguard Qualification training, hockey, netball, football, rugby, karate and canoeing. In addition, many schools offer free use of their sites and facilities for larger sporting events such as inter-school championships and competitions. This notion of the school as a hub for collaborative endeavours provides much variety, with one school partnering with local schools and the community as a locus for the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), others offering schools the opportunity to visit their organic farms and others opening their grounds and chapels for the use of day retreats. In addition, some schools offer free use of their mini-buses, and drivers. It should be noted that not every school enjoys the type of facilities outlined above: many Prep and Senior schools, particularly those in urban areas, have much more modest estates. However it is evident that where schools are fortunate enough to have such settings, there is a firm desire, indeed an imperative, to share them as much as possible with local partner schools.

This generosity of spirit is founded upon the distinctive, signifying feature of all CISC schools – their Catholic identity. Therefore it not a surprise to find that this aspect of their very nature provides another range of opportunities for ‘building the Kingdom’ with other Catholic schools. These ‘mission’ collaborations, many of them based around diocesan and deanery networks, take a variety of forms, among them joint chaplaincy initiatives, cross-school strategic planning on mission and the development of resources, being a ‘Mother’ school for the Building the Kingdom programme as well as many senior staff being on the Governing Bodies of

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local Catholic voluntary aided schools. These are examples of locally embedded Catholic educational networks. A more national, and indeed international example is that of the Arrupe outreach programme, previously cited (p.6). This Jesuit initiative engages schools in a broad range of activities, which involve sustained and ongoing collaborations with maintained schools, both Catholic and non-Catholic. In addition, what I find particularly significant about Arrupe is that the imperative to participate is a unifying factor across all Jesuit schools, whether maintained or independent. It is the Jesuit charism which brings all schools into community and this overrides any perceived differences between schools based upon their status as independent or maintained. The strength of this unifying approach across the sectors provides a vision for Catholic education we should all be striving for: one that is, on balance, more bound together by its Catholic identity than separated by the nature of its schools. The strength of this collaboration will allow us to build the Kingdom together, within the life-giving tradition of Catholic education. As one school stated: ‘There are many preconceptions about both independent schools, Catholic schools and the families who attend them. We are trying, by ensuring we have a positive presence in the local community, to dispel those myths. When there is so much vitriol in the media towards independent schools at present, it is very important to show our local communities that our school is incredibly diverse and that we can be a force for good’ (SR).

This desire to be a force for good in society is further realised in some very creative, life enhancing and enriching academic collaborations between independent and maintained schools.

The academic partnerships that exist between independent and maintained schools are exciting examples of the reciprocity of spirit upon which the most effective pedagogies thrive. Grounds being shared for Forest Schools and schools sharing INSET provision and CPD opportunities across the curriculum are mentioned in all responses. The subject areas specifically mentioned in terms of sharing good practice, resources and support are PE – referenced above – Music, Art, Drama, Science and Maths, with collaborations realised through a variety of means. For example, one music project sees a Head of Music ‘upskilling’ non-specialist music teachers in local schools which do not have a music specialist. Of particular interest are the responses from the special schools, whose specialist expertise with reference to specific learning challenges is a valuable source of professional wisdom for local schools. In addition to these subject-led collaborations, there are many other means through which schools engage in meaningful collaborations: one school works in partnership with local maintained schools on delivery of and engagement with the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH); another supports a local primary school which received an inadequate Ofsted report, working in conjunction to support improvements. One school has entered into a formal partnership with a maintained school for the provision of A level subjects where low uptake had made these subjects marginal and unviable in both schools. Pupils now have the opportunity to study Politics, Sociology, Photography and Music across the schools with minibuses transporting students and staff to and fro and SENDCOs working together to support pupils’ individual needs. The heads comment that ‘this arrangement which capitalises on our existing supportive relationship allows us to offer subjects to our respective students which would not otherwise be available and thus mutually benefits both schools’ (SR). Likewise, this school, and several others, offer mentoring and preparation for Oxbridge entry and forums for students intending to study medicine and STEM subjects at university.

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These local partnerships expose a rich mosaic of provision that supports meaningful and authentic learning opportunities enhancing and enriching the educational environment for pupils and colleagues alike. Underlying this is a reciprocity and generosity of spirit which compels CISC schools to ‘work towards the greatest good for all persons’ (SR) in their community, not as an ‘optional extra’, but as an integral part of their founding educational imperative. In so doing, it shows that schools across the sector have more in common than divides them, becoming places where, in the words of one school, ‘compassionate service is lived out according to [our] motto of ‘Cor ad Cor Loquitur’ – heart speaking to heart’.

Conclusion

In ‘Big Yellow Taxi’, Joni Mitchell sang:
‘Don’t it always seem to go
That you don’t know what you’ve got
‘Till it’s gone...’

In contrast, this research seeks to bring us to knowledge of what we do have, while we have it and to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible contribution that CISC schools make to the Common Good. In so doing, what emerges are schools which completely espouse the Gospel imperative that Jesus has come that we may have life and have it to the full (cf. John10:10), in the understanding that this means supporting pupils and all in our communities to flourish in mind, body and spirit, ‘learning to live and love like Jesus’, in what we think, what we say and what we do. The ‘impact [of this] is felt not just by those we help, but also in our own school communities, where the desire to serve others is developed’ (SR). These are life-changing opportunities for all involved: one school noted that the number of alumnae who continue or seriously take up charity work and social action after leaving school has increased, with ‘a large number in the last few years becoming involved in social entrepreneurship projects after leaving school/university’ (SR). In raising awareness through actions and engagement, all come to ‘understand that we have a responsibility to help others’ (SR) and ‘are called to leave the world a better place than we found it’ (SR). In loving God and neighbour in this way, this act of service in the service of others ‘becomes part of our DNA, calling us to work towards the Common Good: giving gratitude for the whole of creation, having an openness to charitable giving...bringing unifying peace to society, commitment to justice generating equality, and overall dignity in life itself’ (SR). Starting with the ‘every day kindnesses shown to one another’ (SR), CISC schools empower their pupils to make a difference now and ‘in the world that lies ahead of them, by using their God given talents and educational achievements in the professions they undertake, for the betterment and good of society’ (SR). Amen to that.

‘Learning to live and love like Jesus’

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“...it really drives home why we exist as Catholic schools ...that it's not just about instructive education. It's the whole holistic package that we offer as schools to help form human beings and without this we are nothing.”

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