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Assessing the impact of the Student Voice Project on shaping the ethos of
Anglican primary schools: A study focusing on the Diocese of Llandaff

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Abstract

The inspection criteria for schools with a religious character within the state-maintained system in England and Wales require the sponsoring body to arrange assessment on aspects of the distinctiveness of the school ethos and on school worship. The Student Voice Project was designed to include year-five and year-six students in this process. Within the Diocese of Llandaff, the Diocesan Director of Education utilised the customised reports prepared at the end of the first year of the survey for schools participating in the project with the senior leadership teams in order to enhance school improvement and effectiveness. The present study compares the responses of the 1,192 students participating in year one of the survey with the responses of the 1,111 students from the same 23 schools participating in year two. These data show a significant overall increase in scores recorded on the five six-item scales designed to measure student attitude toward five areas of ethos. No significant difference was recorded on the five-item scale designed to measure student attitude toward school worship. These findings suggest that the Student Voice Project, effectively implemented by the Diocesan Director of Education, had significant impact on the participating schools.

Keywords: school improvement, school ethos, church schools, student voice, research impact

Introduction

The Student Voice Project was launched by the Church in Wales Board of Education during the school year 2014-15 with the intention of running for a three-year period. The project was designed to engage the student voice in dialogue with the Section 50 inspection criteria as applicable to church primary schools in Wales. During the three consecutive school years, 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17 Anglican primary schools across the six dioceses of the Church in Wales were invited to administer the Lankshear Student Voice Scales developed by Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles (2017), together with the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (see Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2017) and a measure of spiritual wellbeing (see Francis, Fisher, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2018), to their year-five and year-six students. The aim of the project was to provide on each of these school years profiles for the whole Province, for each participating diocese, and for each participating school. The school level profiles were designed to assist governors and staff within individual schools to reflect on their students' perception of the school ethos and to draw on these data both to assist school self-reflection on strategic development, and to contribute to an evidence-based school inspection process.

The Diocese of Llandaff occupied a central position in the launch of the Student Voice Project for two reasons. First, the Diocese of Llandaff offers a good number of primary school places. Second, the Provincial Education Officer also served as the Diocesan Director of Education for Llandaff. In this capacity the Diocesan Director of Education took personal oversight of the project within the Diocese of Llandaff and ensured that the senior leadership teams within individual schools were equipped to make effective use of the customised reports from the first year of the survey (2014-15). As a consequence schools within the Diocese of Llandaff had been challenged to explore the implications of the findings of the project from the first year for policy and for practice before undertaking the survey for the

second time (2015-16). The comparison between the findings from these two administrations of the survey in year one (2014-15) and year two (2015-16) may offer some insight into the impact of the Student Voice Project on participating schools.

The distinctiveness of Anglican schools

The peculiar situation of Anglican church schools in England and Wales can only be properly understood in light of the historical context from which they arose. The origins of the state-maintained system of education in Wales lies in the voluntary initiatives taken by the churches between 1780 and 1870, especially through bodies like the National Society founded by the Anglican Church in 1811 and the British and Foreign Schools Society founded largely by the Free Churches in 1814 (see Cruikshank, 1963; Murphy, 1971; Chadwick, 1997). It was not until the Education Act 1870 that the state established a mechanism for building schools independent of such voluntary initiatives (Rich, 1970). The current provision was largely shaped by the Education Act 1944 (Dent, 1947) which incorporated the results of detailed negotiations between the government of the day and the Churches (Butler, 1973). As a consequence of the Education Act 1944, the Churches were able to retain their involvement in the state-maintained system of education through both voluntary controlled schools and voluntary aided schools. In voluntary aided schools the church retained on-going financial responsibilities in respect of the fabric, and as a consequence also retained greater control over staff appointments and over religious education.

The classic discussion of the purpose and rationale for the Anglican Church's continued involvement within the state-maintained sector of schools in England and Wales advanced by the Durham Report (1970) distinguished between two distinctive objectives defined as the *general* aim (intending to serve the nation through the provision of education for all) and the *domestic* aim (intending to serve the children of the Church). The Durham

Report (1970) argued that, while in 1811, when the National Society was founded, these two aims may have been closely aligned, by the 1970s the changing nature of society had polarised them. The Durham Report prioritised the general aim over the domestic aim, prioritising service of the nation over the nurture of the children of the Church. This view was consistent with a wider view of that time that a clear divide should exist between the educational function of schools and the nurturing function of churches (see Schools Council, 1971; Hirst, 1972; Hull, 1975; British Council of Churches, 1976, 1981). Subsequent key reports from the Church of England have maintained this key distinction presented by the Durham Report (1970) between the general function and the domestic functions of church schools, but suggested different ways of retuning the balance between these two functions (Waddington, 1984; Dearing, 2001; Chadwick, 2012; Church of England Education Office, 2016).

School inspection

A key motivation for the Anglican Church in England and Wales to reflect on the distinctive mission and identity of church schools within the state-maintained sector arose from the Education (Schools) Act 1992 that provided for the regular inspection of every state-maintained school in England and Wales. This inspection system was managed by the same government office across all state-maintained schools. Additionally, however, the governors of voluntary schools within the state-maintained system were required to appoint independent inspectors to ensure that those aspects of the school which had been their responsibility to oversee, with advice from the Church that provided the school, were inspected on the same time scale. The provisions for the main inspection were contained in Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and for 'denominational inspection of church schools' in Section 13. These two inspections became known by schools and others involved as Section 9 and Section 13 inspections. The Education Act 1993 contained an amendment to the

Education (Schools) Act 1992 which was designed to clarify the arrangements for inspection of voluntary controlled schools, where the drafting in the previous year had left room for different interpretations of a key clause. Although the School Inspections Act 1996, being a consolidation act, changed nothing of the content of the law, it did change the numbering of the sections by which the law becomes known in common parlance. Thus, until the Education Act 2005 the denominational inspections were known as Section 23 inspections. Since the passage of the Education Act 2005 the inspections have been known as Section 48 inspections in England and Section 50 inspections in Wales.

The need to provide a coherent rationale and model for shaping and inspecting Anglican schools in England and Wales generated a series of publications reflecting on and specifying aspects of the character and distinctiveness of Anglican schools, including Lankshear (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 2000), Duncan and Lankshear (1995), and Lankshear and Hall (2003). The Anglican Church also published a series of booklets on specific school-related issues, including the curriculum (Lankshear, 1990), spiritual development (Brown & Furlong, 1996), moral education (Ainsworth & Brown, 1995), anti-racism (Griffith & Lankshear, 1996) and the multi-faith church school (Brown, 1997). Building on these kinds of initiatives the National Society published a series of handbooks designed to encourage, shape and inform the inspection of Anglican schools in England and Wales (see Brown & Lankshear, 1995, 1997, 2000).

In light of the divergence of the English and Welsh education systems following the devolution of powers concerning educational provision to the Welsh Government, the Church in Wales has created its own responses to the particular inspection needs of Church in Wales schools. This process was exemplified by the publication of *The Church in Wales Education Review* (Lankshear, 2009) and by the creation of a Church in Wales adaptation of the National Society's framework for inspection. The Church in Wales arrangements are known

by the acronym GWELLA and are conducted under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005.

Details of the arrangements for these inspections can be found at

www.churchschoolcymru.org.

Engaging the student voice

As part of its continuing response to the Section 50 inspection requirements the Church in Wales initiated the Student Voice Project in 2013 in order to assess the extent to which the students' experiences of their schools were consistent with the aspirations of the church concerning the distinctive school ethos of church primary schools. During the school year 2013-14 David W. Lankshear and colleagues worked alongside the Provincial Education Officer for the Church in Wales to design a set of scales constructed to map areas identified by the Section 50 inspection criteria concerning aspects of the distinctiveness of the school ethos and concerning school worship. The design and development of the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS) is reported by Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles (2017), drawing on data provided by 1,899 year-five and year-six students to an initial battery of 50 Likert-style items designed to sample the range of ethos-related questions raised by the Section 50 inspection criteria, Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles (2017) distilled six sets of items. The first set of six items, styled attitude toward school ethos or character, achieved an alpha coefficient of .73. The second set of six items, styled attitude toward school experience, achieved an alpha coefficient of .78. The third set of six items, styled attitude toward school teachers, achieved an alpha coefficient of .77. The fourth set of six items, styled attitude toward relationships in school, achieved an alpha coefficient of .78. The fifth set of six items, styled attitude toward school and environment, achieved an alpha coefficient of .75. The sixth set of five items, styled attitude toward school worship, achieved an alpha coefficient of .78. These six scales were subsequently employed by Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2018) to explore the attitudes of a sample of 4,581 year-four, year-five, and year-six students attending Church in

Wales primary schools. These data confirmed the internal consistency reliability of the six measures and showed more positive attitudes to be associated with being female, being younger, and attending church. Overall the students displayed positive attitudes toward school ethos or character, toward school experience, toward school teachers, toward relationships within school, and toward school and environment. Attitude toward school worship was less positive.

Diocese of Llandaff

The Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Llandaff (who also served as Provincial Education Officer for the Church in Wales) identified the strategic benefit of harnessing the findings from the Student Voice Project for equipping schools within the Diocese of Llandaff to reflect on their self-evaluation against the criteria identified by the Section 50 inspection requirements relating to the distinctive ethos of Anglican primary schools in Wales. Following their participation in the first year of the survey, each of the 23 participating schools in the Diocese received a customised report on the responses of their students set alongside an aggregated total for the whole Diocese. The Diocesan Director of Education discussed these customised reports with the senior management teams within the participating schools with the intention of assisting school improvement and effectiveness to address criteria within the church-related inspection strategy relevant to school ethos and to school worship.

Research question

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to explore the effect of the way in which the Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Llandaff employed the research findings from year one of the Student Voice Project to change policy and practice within the 23 participating schools to enhance the effectiveness of these schools in implementing the distinctive Anglican ethos of the schools in line with the criteria identified

by the Section 50 inspection process. The research hypothesis was that significant change in school policy and practice needed to be experienced and recognised by the student body in order to be deemed truly effective. Evidence for such effectiveness could be established by comparing the overall responses from the first cohort of students in year one to the Lankshear Student Voices Scales with the overall responses of the second cohort of students in year two to the same scales. Significant increases in the students' scores on the scales designed to measure their experience of and attitude toward the distinctive ethos characteristics of Anglican schools could be deemed consistent with these characteristics having become more evident within the policy and practice of the school.

Research design

The present study was designed to test the effectiveness of the intervention implemented by the Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Llandaff utilising data provided by the Student Voice Project by means of a *controlled* design that has two separate components. The first component employed a control variable and the second component employed a control group. This design was implemented to help differentiate between the potential impact generated by the students' participation in the Student Voice Project itself and the potential impact generated by the intervention implemented specifically within the Diocese of Llandaff.

Control variable

In the year in which the study was established in the Diocese of Llandaff (2014-15), there were insufficient schools participating from other dioceses to establish a sufficiently large control group (in which the intervention of the Diocesan Director of Education was not involved in the same way as in the Diocese of Llandaff), but at this stage it was possible to include a control variable within the survey conducted within the Diocese of Llandaff. The notion of a control variable is to include a measure employed in the two surveys (conducted

before and after the intervention) regarding which it is hypothesised that the intervention is irrelevant. The empirical test then is to explore whether the intervention has effect on scores recorded on the core variables (hypothesised to be relevant to the intervention) but not on the control variable. This understanding of control variables has its roots in the classic formulation of construct validity by Cronbach and Meehl (1955) who differentiate between measures of factors hypothesised to be associated with the construct under consideration and measures of factors hypothesised as independent from the construct under consideration. Control variables of this nature have recently been employed in studies measuring the impact of educational interventions by Francis, Pike, Lickona, Lankshear, and Nesfield (2018) and by Trowsdale, McKenna, and Francis (2019). This notion of control variables is derived from Cronbach and Meehl's (1955) classic formulation of construct validity which affirm validation when the current theory of the construct under consideration 'can embrace the variates which yield positive correlations, and does not predict correlations where we found none' (p. 283). The control variable included alongside the Lankshear Student Voice Scales was the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (see Francis, 1978a, 1978b; Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2017). This is a 24-item Likert attitude scale designed to assess affective responses toward five recognised and visible aspects of the Christian tradition (God, Jesus, Bible, prayer, and church). This instrument has been employed in a number of studies concerned with assessing the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican schools, including work reported by Francis (1979, 1986, 1987), Francis and Carter (1980), Francis and Jewell (1992), and Francis and Village (2019) (and so in that sense highly relevant to the Student Voice Project) and yet was not directly implicated in the way in which the findings from the Student Voice Project were interpreted and applied within schools in the Diocese of Llandaff (and so in this sense unlikely to be directly influenced by changes or developments in school policy and practice effected by the Student Voice Project).

Control group

Although a control group was not available to set alongside the Diocese of Llandaff in years one and two of the survey, such a group was available in years two and three, when 41 schools from across four of the other five dioceses participated in both years. Since Anglican primary schools in the Diocese of Llandaff tend to be larger than in other more rural dioceses, the total number of year-four and year-six students involved in those 41 schools (N = 2,453) was not greatly dissimilar from the total number of year-five and year-six students involved in the 23 schools within the Diocese of Llandaff (N = 2,303). Since the kind of intervention implemented within the Diocese of Llandaff was not implemented in these other dioceses there is no reason to hypothesise an improvement in overall student scores between the administration of the survey in the first year (2015-16) and the administration of the survey in the second year (2016-17).

Method

Procedure

As part of a Province-wide initiative across all six dioceses (Bangor, Llandaff, Monmouth, St Asaph, St Davids, and Swansea and Brecon), the Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Llandaff arranged for all 23 Church in Wales primary schools within the Diocese to participate in the Student Voice Project in the two school years 2014-15 and 2015 -16. Subsequently 41 schools across four of the other dioceses participated in the Student Voice Project in the two schools years 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The Student Voice questionnaires were administered to all year-five and year-six students (age 9 to 11 years) within the participating schools at the beginning of the school year during year one and year two of the school's participation. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity and given the option not to participate in returning their

questionnaire for analysis at the end of the session if they did not want their voice to be heard in the study.

Instrument

The Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS; Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles, 2017) operationalised the Section 50 inspection criteria by five six-item scales (assessing attitude toward school character, attitude toward school experience, attitude toward school teachers, attitude toward relationships in school, and attitude toward school and environment) and one five-item scale (assessing attitude toward school worship). Each item was assessed on the conventional five-point scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Worship attendance of students was assessed by the question: ‘Apart from special occasions (like weddings) how often do you attend a place of religious worship (e.g. church, mosque, temple, etc...)?’ followed by the options: never (1), once or twice a year (2), sometimes (3), at least once a month (4), and weekly (5).

Personal prayer of students was assessed by the question, ‘Do you pray when you are on your own?’ followed by the options: never (1), once or twice a year (2), sometimes (3), at least once a week (4), and daily (5).

Personal factors were assessed by two dichotomous variables: sex, male (1) and female (2); and school year, year five (1) and year six (2).

Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis, 1978a, 1978b; Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2017) operationalised affective responses to five areas of Christianity (God, Jesus, Bible, prayer, and church). Each item was assessed on the conventional five-point scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Analysis

The data were analysed by the SPSS statistical package, employing the frequency, reliability, and t-test routines.

Method: Diocese of Llandaff

Participants

Over the two administrations 2,303 students participated in the project: 1,192 in year one and 1,111 in year two. In year one the participants comprised 619 males and 573 females; 601 year five-students and 591 year-six students. In terms of frequency of personal prayer, 24% reported never, 11% once or twice a year, 33% sometimes, 12% at least once a week, and 20% daily. In terms of frequency of religious worship, 29% reported never, 16% once or twice a year, 24% sometimes, 8% at least once a month, and 22% weekly. In year two the participants comprised 546 males and 565 females; 542 year five-students and 569 year-six students. In terms of frequency of personal prayer, 26% reported never, 10% once or twice a year, 33% sometimes, 11% at least once a week, and 20% daily. In terms of frequency of religious worship, 19% reported never, 14% once or twice a year, 31% sometimes, 11% at least once a month, and 26% weekly.

Results and discussion: Diocese of Llandaff

- insert table 1 about here -

Table 1 presents the psychometric properties of the six measures proposed by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (Lankshear, Francis, & Eccles, 2017) and the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2017) in terms of the alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), and the means and standard deviations. All seven measures achieved a good level of internal consistency reliability with alpha coefficients in excess of .70 (DeVellis, 2003).

- insert table 2 about here -

Table 2 presents the mean scores recorded on the six measures proposed by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales both in year one and in year two. These data demonstrated statistically significant increases in scale scores across the five measures concerned with school ethos (school character, school experiences, school teachers, relationships in school, and school and environment). No significant difference, however, was recorded between the mean scale scores on the measure concerned with school worship or on the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity in year one and year two.

- insert table 3 about here -

While the mean scale scores are important for testing the overall significance of shifts between year one and year two, greater texture can be provided for these overall conclusions by examining responses to the individual items comprising these six scales. Each of these 35 scale items was rated on a five-point scale: agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1). The percentages reported in table 3 relate to the proportion of students rating each item as 'agree strongly'. Increases in these percentages between year one and year two represent the additional proportion of students who chose this highest rating. In the following discussion, attention will be drawn to those items that attracted endorsement from at least an additional 4% of the students.

In terms of attitude toward school character, an additional 12% of students rated worship as very important in this school (from 62% to 74%). An additional 8% rated their school as a really good school (from 58% to 66%). An additional 4% rated prayer as very important in their school (from 67% to 71%). These statistics (from three items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project prayer and worship had become more visible within the ethos of the schools and that there was a growing sense that the school itself was really good.

In terms of attitude to school experience, an additional 7% of students reported that their school looks good (from 42% to 49%). An additional 6% rated their school as a peaceful place (from 28% to 34%). An additional 6% rated that in their school they can be themselves (from 38% to 44%). An additional 5% rated the rules in their school as fair (from 43% to 48%). An additional 4% rated their school as a safe place (from 55% to 59%). These statistics (from five items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project students were in receipt of an enhanced experience of school life, seeing the school as a safe, a fairer, and a more peaceful place in which they could flourish (really be themselves).

In terms of attitude toward school teachers, an additional 6% of students perceived the teachers in their school as caring a lot for each other (from 58% to 64%). An additional 5% perceived the teachers in their school as caring a lot for the world around them (from 57% to 62%). An additional 5% found that when they do well in school their teachers praise them (from 41% to 46%). An additional 4% perceived the teachers in their school as caring a lot for all the children (from 60% to 64%). These statistics (from three items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project the teachers have been working harder to reflect the distinctive ethos of the school in practice and that this has been noticed and affirmed by the students.

In terms of attitude toward relationships in the school, an additional 9% of students considered that in their school we care a lot for each other (from 49% to 58%). An additional 5% considered that in their school we value each other (from 49% to 54%). An additional 4% considered that their school teaches them to respect other people (from 67% to 71%). These statistics (from three items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project more attention may have been given to relationships within the school and that the students had responded positively to this.

In terms of attitude toward school and environment, an additional 7% of students considered that they were proud of their school building (from 53% to 57%). An additional 14% considered that their school teaches them to respect wonderful things (from 49% to 63%). These statistics (from two items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project more effort may have been taken to enable the school grounds to speak of the wonder of the natural world.

In terms of attitude toward school worship, an additional 7% of students rated visits from the vicar as enjoyable (from 31% to 38%). An additional 6% reported that being quiet and still is important to them (from 22% to 28%). An additional 5% reported that they enjoy being with the whole school (from 38% to 43%). These statistics (from three items) suggest that following the first year of the Student Voice Project more careful and considered preparation was being invested in school worship and in the school assembly.

Method: Control group

Participants

Over the two administrations 2,453 students participated in the project: 1,194 in year one and 1,259 in year two. In year one the participants comprised 610 males and 584 females; 633 year-five students and 561 year-six students. In terms of frequency of personal prayer, 34% reported never, 10% once or twice a year, 35% sometimes, 8% at least once a week, and 13% daily. In terms of religious worship, 21% reported never, 16% once or twice a year, 37% sometimes, 12% at least once a month, and 15% weekly. In year two the participants comprised 670 males and 589 females; 649 year-five students and 610 year-six students. In terms of frequency of personal prayer 37% reported never, 11% once or twice a year, 31% sometimes, 10% at least once a week, and 11% daily. In terms of religious worship 22% reported never, 15% once or twice a year, 37% sometimes, 11% at least once a month, and 15% weekly.

Results and discussion: Control group

- insert table 4 about here -

Table 4 presents the psychometric properties of the six measures proposed by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (Lankshear, Francis, & Eccles, 2017) in terms of the alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), and the means and standard deviations. All six measures achieved a good level of internal consistency reliability with alpha coefficients in excess of .70 (DeVellis, 2003).

- insert table 5 about here -

Table 5 presents the mean scores recorded on the six measures proposed by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales in year one and in year two. The data demonstrated that in year two overall the students recorded a statistically significant decline in attitude scores on all five of the ethos measures (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, and school and environment) and no statistically significant difference in scores recorded on the scale of attitude toward school worship. In other words, it is clear that without managed intervention the Student Voice Project does not lead to significant enhancement of student experience of and attitude toward the distinctive school ethos criteria identified within the Section 50 inspection process.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore the impact of the intervention effected in the Diocese of Llandaff designed to enhance student experience of and attitude toward the distinctive Anglican ethos criteria identified by the Section 50 inspection process by drawing on the research findings customised for individual schools from the first year of the Student Voice Project. The impact on student experience and attitude was assessed by comparing the overall responses of the first cohort of year-five and year-six students in year one (2014-15) to the Lankshear Student Voice Scales with the second cohort of students in year two (2015-

16) to the same scales. The data confirmed a good level of internal consistency reliability for the six measures proposed by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales commending them as appropriate instruments on which to compare the mean scores recorded by two independent samples, as recruited in the same schools during two successive years.

The main conclusion to emerge from this study is that overall in year two students recorded significantly higher mean scale score than in year one on five of the six measures. In year two students recorded significantly higher mean scores on the scale of attitude toward school character, on the scale of attitude toward school experience, on the scale of attitude toward school teachers, on the scale of attitude toward relationships in school, and on the scale of attitude toward school environment. Given that these five scales were designed by Lankshear, Francis, & Eccles (2017) to reflect the expected Anglican school ethos characteristics as identified by the Section 50 inspection criteria, the conclusion can be drawn that the Student Voice Project was effective in achieving the objective for which the Church in Wales commissioned the project.

While the mean scale scores provide the scientific evidence that the student experience of and attitude toward the distinctive ethos of Anglican schools was enhanced by the Student Voice Project, the inspection of the individual scale items has added texture to this interpretation. The differences in the levels of endorsement given to the individual items between year one and year two suggest that five distinctive outcomes have been achieved.

First, in terms of attitude toward school character, following the first year of the Student Voice Project, prayer and worship had become more visible within the ethos of the school and there was a growing sense that the school is a really good school.

Second, in terms of attitude toward school experience, following the first year of the Student Voice Project, students were experiencing the school as a safer, a fairer, and a more peaceful place in which they could flourish and be themselves.

Third, in terms of attitude toward school teachers, following the first year of the Student Voice Project, students were perceiving their teachers as showing greater care for each other, greater care for the students, and greater care for the world around them. At the same time, students were conscious of receiving a higher level of affirmation from the teachers.

Fourth, in terms of attitude toward relationships in the school, following the first year of the Student Voice Project, students were perceiving more positive relationships throughout the school, reflected in the value and in the respect being shown among the students and the staff. At the same time students were conscious of a higher level of teaching intended to promote respect.

Fifth, in terms of attitude toward school and environment, following the first year of the Student Voice Project, students were taking a greater pride in their school building, and were more conscious that their school was teaching them to respect wonderful things and to care for their environment.

Although the sixth scale, concerning attitude toward school worship, did not signify a significant increase in mean scores between year one and year two, three items within this scale shared the trend in the direction of enhanced student experience and student attitude. Following the first year of the Student Voice Project, students were rating specific aspects of school worship more highly, including visits from the vicar, periods of being quiet and still, and the experience of being with the whole school. Improvement in these areas is highly consistent with the objectives of the Anglican school ethos as reflected in the Section 50 inspection criteria.

Alongside the six measures concerned with the Section 50 inspection criteria, the survey of students within Church in Wales primary schools in the Diocese of Llandaff also included as a control variable the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. The theory

being tested was that, while the intervention of the Diocesan Director of Education was hypothesised to effect changes to school policy and practice regarding aspects of the school directly relevant to Section 50 inspection criteria, this intervention was also hypothesised *not* to effect changes relevant to the students' attitude toward Christianity. This theory was supported by the data.

A second study conceived as a control group compared the overall responses of a comparable number of students who completed the Lankshear Student Voice Scales in two successive years but without the intervention being used within those schools designed to engage the senior leadership team in serious reflection on the research findings generated for these schools from the first year of participation in the survey. Without the engagement with the customised research findings and the challenge to modify policy and practice on the basis of the research findings, no enhancement in student experience of and attitude toward distinctive Anglican schools ethos occurred between year one and year two. In other words, the improvement in overall scores achieved within the Diocese of Llandaff cannot be attributed merely to participation in the survey, but rather to active engagement with the research findings in a way intentionally designed to impact policy and practice.

On the basis of these findings, the Student Voice Project, involving both carefully designed research and strategic reflection on the outcome of research related to educational policy and practice, can be commended for further use within other Provinces of the Anglican Church in which the Anglican Church is actively involved in the provision of denominationally distinctive schools within the state-maintained sector, including England and the Republic of Ireland.

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Table 1

Scale properties: Diocese of Llandaff

| | N items | Alpha | Mean | SD |
|--------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| School character | 6 | .73 | 26.38 | 3.17 |
| School experience | 6 | .79 | 24.63 | 4.15 |
| School teachers | 6 | .78 | 26.20 | 3.44 |
| Relationships in school | 6 | .79 | 27.18 | 2.93 |
| School and environment | 6 | .76 | 26.43 | 3.21 |
| School worship | 5 | .80 | 18.43 | 4.61 |
| Attitude to Christianity | 24 | .97 | 91.89 | 22.26 |

Note: N participants = 2,303

Table 2

Mean attitude scores for year 1 and year 2: Diocese of Llandaff

| | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> < |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|----------|------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| School character | 26.20 | 3.26 | 26.57 | 3.07 | 2.79 | .01 |
| School experience | 24.34 | 4.15 | 24.95 | 4.11 | 3.54 | .001 |
| School teachers | 25.96 | 3.54 | 26.45 | 3.33 | 3.39 | .001 |
| Relationships in school | 27.06 | 2.90 | 27.30 | 3.10 | 1.95 | .05 |
| School and environment | 26.33 | 3.13 | 26.64 | 3.28 | 2.33 | .05 |
| School worship | 18.34 | 4.52 | 18.53 | 4.70 | 0.99 | NS |
| Attitude to Christianity | 91.91 | 22.21 | 91.86 | 22.34 | 0.52 | NS |

Note: N participants, year 1 = 1,192; year 2 = 1,111

Table 3

School-related attitudes: Diocese of Llandaff by year

| | Year 1 % | Year 2 % |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>Attitude toward school character</i> | | |
| My school is a really good school | 58 | 66 |
| My school is a really caring school | 53 | 54 |
| My school treats every child fairly | 41 | 44 |
| Worship is very important in my school | 62 | 74 |
| My school is a really friendly school | 49 | 51 |
| Prayer is very important in my school | 67 | 71 |
| <i>Attitude toward school experience</i> | | |
| In my school the rules are fair | 43 | 48 |
| In my school I can be myself | 38 | 44 |
| My school is a peaceful place | 28 | 34 |
| My school is a safe place | 55 | 59 |
| My school looks good | 42 | 49 |
| My school is a clean place | 37 | 40 |
| <i>Attitude toward school teachers</i> | | |
| The teachers in my school care a lot for all the children | 60 | 64 |
| The teachers in my school care a lot for each other | 58 | 64 |
| The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us | 57 | 62 |
| The teachers in my school care a lot about the school | 69 | 72 |
| When I do well in my school the teachers praise me | 41 | 46 |
| When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me | 38 | 41 |
| <i>Attitude toward relationships in school</i> | | |
| My school teaches me to respect other people | 67 | 71 |
| My school teaches me to respect other people's things | 67 | 69 |
| My school teaches me to care for other people | 69 | 71 |
| At my school we value each other | 49 | 54 |
| In my school we care a lot for each other | 49 | 58 |
| Caring for others is very important in my school | 69 | 69 |
| <i>Attitude toward school and environment</i> | | |
| My school teaches me to respect things that grow | 47 | 49 |
| My school teaches me to respect wonderful things | 49 | 63 |
| My school teaches me to care for the world around us | 72 | 70 |
| At my school we are proud of our school grounds | 46 | 53 |
| At my school we are proud of our school buildings | 53 | 57 |
| Keeping the school tidy is important in my school | 61 | 64 |
| <i>Attitude toward school worship</i> | | |
| I enjoy being with the whole school | 38 | 43 |
| I enjoy visits from the vicar | 31 | 38 |
| Singing is important to me | 38 | 39 |
| Being quiet and still is important to me | 22 | 28 |
| Listening to the Bible is important to me | 32 | 33 |

Note: % = percentage of students rating the item 'agree strongly' on the five-point scale

Table 4

Scale properties: Control group

| | N items | Alpha | Mean | SD |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|------|
| School character | 6 | .74 | 29.24 | 3.22 |
| School experience | 6 | .79 | 24.83 | 3.94 |
| School teachers | 6 | .78 | 26.44 | 3.23 |
| Relationships in school | 6 | .81 | 27.07 | 2.95 |
| School and environment | 6 | .77 | 26.37 | 3.06 |
| School worship | 5 | .79 | 18.74 | 4.32 |

Note: N = 2,453 cases

Table 5

Mean attitude scores for year 1 and year 2: Control group

| | Year 1 | | Year 2 | | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> < |
|-------------------------|--------|------|--------|------|----------|------------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| School character | 26.43 | 3.22 | 26.06 | 3.22 | 2.85 | .01 |
| School experience | 25.17 | 3.89 | 24.51 | 3.96 | 4.18 | .001 |
| School teachers | 26.70 | 3.20 | 26.19 | 3.24 | 3.91 | .001 |
| Relationships in school | 27.40 | 2.85 | 26.77 | 3.00 | 5.32 | .001 |
| School and environment | 26.05 | 3.10 | 26.11 | 3.00 | 4.33 | .001 |
| School worship | 18.65 | 4.47 | 18.84 | 4.18 | 1.18 | NS |

Note: N participants, year 1 = 1,194; year 2 = 1,259