

Education Matters**ISSUE 22.2**

(February 2022 issue)

Welcome to this latest edition of CViE Education Matters, for February 2022.

Education Matters are designed to provide parents and those interested in education with current “snippets” of information that might be of help in understanding and dealing with educational and parenting issues.

In this edition we cover the following:

EDUCATION

Assessment and testing in primary education in England

Sexual harassment in schools

Children's mental health

The teenage years and the challenge of secondary education

TECHNOLOGY

Workshop: Preparing for your child's first phone

SOCIAL AND MORAL

Books of interest

Religious Education and British Values

The Queen's Accession and the Platinum Jubilee

We would also bring your attention to some recent posts on the CViE website, “Asking the right questions on gender identity in education”, and “Gambling: the dangers” - click [here](#) for all CViE blog posts.

On behalf of the CViE trustees -
With Christian regards,

Michael

(M Ridout, Chair CViE)

EDUCATION*Assessment and testing in primary education in England*

This House of Commons Library Briefing provides an overview of national curriculum assessments (SATs) in primary education in England. The briefing contains a useful table showing the normal arrangements for tests that are normally undertaken in

state-funded primary phase schools in England which may be of help to parents in understanding this aspect of their children's education.

SATs, or national curriculum assessments, are assessments of primary pupils' progress and attainment. They are currently completed at the end of key stage 1 (infant phase) and key stage 2 (end of primary/ junior phase). At key stage 2, the tests are more formal and school-level results are normally published in national performance tables allowing for comparison with other schools. These are often known as league tables. SATs cover core academic subjects – English, Maths, and Science.

There were no national curriculum assessments at either key stage 1 or key stage 2 in the 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years, because of the pandemic. The assessments – for both KS1 and KS2 pupils – are planned to take place as normal in 2021/22, although school-level performance data won't be published for this year.

The briefing can be found by [clicking here](#).

Sexual harassment in schools

All schools in England must have a child protection policy in place, including measures in relation to protecting children from sexual harassment, whether from staff members or their peers. This House of Commons Library Briefing provides information on the duties placed on schools and colleges relating to sexual harassment and the need for clear policies for dealing with allegations against staff members and/or pupils.

CViE has previously highlighted that the government asked OFSTED in March 2021 to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding policies in state and independent schools. The review reported widespread sexual harassment in schools, and made recommendations for action in schools, government, and OFSTED to combat the problem.

Sadly, as our nation has turned its back on biblical teaching regarding sex and relationships so there has been an eroding of the moral framework of the country. More concerning are the consequences of this erosion and the impact of sexual abuse in its many forms on young lives.

The Lord grant to us prayerful concern over these things and for those impacted by sexual abuse and their parents, help on how to handle these matters together with standing firm to the Word of God and speaking out, in love, regarding the consequences of ideologies and practices contrary to biblical teaching.

Children's mental health

We are grateful to CViE supporters who have brought to our attention the contribution made to the debate on "Children's Mental Health" by Miriam Cates MP who is a practising Christian and former science teacher. Miriam Cates made the following points during the debate:

"Over recent years, we have seen the increasing politicisation of children in schools. Parents across England frequently write to me about extreme gender ideology and other radical ideologies being taught in schools and reinforced by the internet. When gender non-conforming, autistic, same-sex attracted or troubled children are being told by trusted adults that their problems can be solved by changing sex, we have a serious safeguarding and wellbeing issue. The rise of the internet, particularly social media, presents a serious threat to our children's mental health. There is a huge piece of work to do to keep children safe online, and tech companies must step up. Family breakdown is a threat to children's wellbeing. Children aged 11 to 16 who live with a lone parent are twice as likely to be diagnosed with a mental disorder as those who live with both parents. It is no surprise that our children are facing a crisis of mental health when we have one of the highest family breakdown rates in the western world."

Her contribution ended with the words, "As the proverb says: **Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**"

It is 'encouraging' that there are those who speak out, in Parliament, on moral issues - yet what a sad indictment on our land that such things need saying in the House of Commons. How we need to pray for those Christians in government that they might be helped to stand on the Word of God.

If you're interested in reading the transcript of Miriam Cates' speech in Hansard, this can be done by [clicking here](#).

[Note: CViE has also previously signposted to an article on the Christian Institute website regarding the stand made by Miriam Cates when she spoke out, during a House of Commons debate, about the ideologies being promoted by Stonewall and Mermaids. The article can be found by [clicking here](#).]

The Teenage Years and the Challenge of Secondary Education

This article, in *Precious Seed* (Volume 77, Issue 1), has been brought to our attention and many of the points made are ones that we would recognise and share in the prayerful concern expressed by the author.

"When the eleven-year-old walks through the gates of their secondary school for the very first time, it is the beginning of the first day of a most challenging period in their lives. It is not only challenging for them, but also for their parents. There is a major

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leap from primary to secondary education as a huge culture change is about to take place in their education. How will they cope with what they will be taught, especially with what is contrary to the word of God? This latter issue does not simply affect a secondary school student who is saved or one who comes from a Christian home. There is the alarming consequence of unsaved teenagers being turned away from divine truth, thereby instilling in their minds an opposing attitude to spiritual matters in these impressionable years.

“First, there is one major contribution which every believer can be active in and that is to pray daily for the welfare of everyone they know by name who is at school. Whether it is family, children of friends and neighbours or any other child one is acquainted with. The throne of grace is the place to petition for their spiritual welfare, safe keeping, and blessing. Do not forget to tell them that you are praying for them too. For many children, an interest in their progress at school is also a great encouragement..... A listening ear may well also pick up on issues such as bullying and enable you to work with them to do something about it.

“Second, the challenge of school life should be counterbalanced by a calm, loving, supportive and secure home life. For believers, a loving, caring home life is a prime responsibility. In an age of defiance, you cannot tell a child something is wrong if they cannot see that which is right being practised in their own home and family. Teenagers are encouraged to inquire widely, listen to diverse ideas, and arguments and ask questions, some of which are very challenging. In former days, some adults would dismiss these with the remark that ‘we do not talk about things like that’ or ‘you do not need to know such things’. Teenagers in the 21st century cannot have their questions brushed aside. If parents will not answer them, then they will most likely get the answer from worldly-wise students at school.

“Third, providing a biblical perspective on some of the topics taught will also be a help, offering guidance on the social and moral ills our children encounter. The Bible gives many sad accounts of the outcomes of such behaviour and the fact that the consequences were far-reaching. There are also a multitude of very helpful sources that present the truth of creation and that use able and often distinguished scientists to do it. Elders may be able to tackle some of the issues through Bible Class topics or in the home.

“There are no instant fixes. Parents cannot assume that their teenage children will have the same strong beliefs and convictions as themselves. That is why there is a need for scriptural principles to be practised and nourished in every realm of life.

“It is important to state that there is a multitude of very able, caring and committed schoolteachers who may not necessarily agree with everything which they are required to teach, but work hard to ensure that those in their charge receive a good education and are shielded from unrighteous conduct. They need the prayers of all God’s people.

“Pray earnestly for all who pass through the school gates each weekday morning that God will be glorified through every teacher and that each student will be blessed with that which is profitable for their wellbeing whether spiritually, morally, or physically. Above all, every believer should take to heart that the parents of teenagers do not need your criticism, they need and will value your prayers. Take the example of Epaphras, whom Paul commends as one who is **always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God**, Col. 4. 12. It is easy to quote but do we fully understand the immense value and privilege of a fervent prayer life? May the Lord give us compassionate, concerned hearts of love for the teenagers in these dark and evil days.”

The article can be found by [clicking here](#).

[Note: *Precious Seed* is ‘a magazine to encourage the study of the Scriptures, the practice of New Testament Church principles and to stimulate interest in gospel work’. Its readership is primarily those in open Brethren assemblies and although there may be differences between us regarding doctrine and practice; there are many similarities over the concern for the education of children and bringing “them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”.]

TECHNOLOGY

Work Shop: Preparing for your child’s first phone

It is probably true to say parents over the generations have been faced with the question “when do I let my child have a...?” For many parents today, the question is “when do I let my child have a mobile phone?”

The Siouxland Modern Media Committee of the Netherlands Reform Congregations recently ran a webinar “Preparing for your child’s first phone”. The first speaker spoke about the need for a cell phone (mobile phone) contract between parents and their children setting the ground rules of what is expected in having access to mobile phone. Five areas were considered: general parameters, personal responsibility, being a good citizen, expected communication and safety concerns. The presenter also made the point that as parents we should be role models of appropriate mobile phone use -- now there’s a challenge!

The second speaker addressed “Our family phone journey” and spoke of the need to provide a framework of rules for the use of phones. One point made was that the only charging point for phones was in the kitchen, this is where phones were found overnight (now there is another point to consider). Although perhaps not directly relevant to the UK, reference was made to gabb phones which are similar to smartphones but do not have Internet access. This, however, the set a background

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for questions around managing the functionality of mobile phones and monitoring their use.

The third speaker addressed “My child’s phone journey” and emphasised the need for setting boundaries as early as possible as they are harder to put in place once habits have developed. The speaker emphasised the need for temperance in phone use and explained how they use facilities within Google to monitor the way their offspring were using phones.

The most important point emphasised is that nothing replaces communication between parents and the children in explaining the reasons why boundaries are needed. The point was also made that monitoring and filtering tools are not a substitute for not communicating but can be used to enhance the dialogue that takes place.

The webinar can be found by [clicking here](#). (For information, the presentations start at 1:28)

The following link may be of interest in providing examples of parent:child a [mobile phone contract](#).

As mentioned, managing children’s use of mobile phones can be challenging and CViE would be pleased to hear, in confidence, experiences that could be shared with others to help manage their offspring’s mobile phone use. Please feel free to contact us at enquiries@cvie.org.uk .

SOCIAL AND MORAL

Books of interest

You may also be aware that Sharon James, a researcher for the Christian Institute, has published two books - *The Lies we are Told, the Truth we Must Hold* and *How Christianity Transformed the World* - that are featured on the Christian Bookshop Ossett [blog](#) .

The material covered in the two books seem very relevant to CViE and we will bring them to the attention of our supporters in the next Education Matters. Further information can be found on the Christian Focus Publications [website](#): the first post was on 22nd January followed by the one on 02 February 2022.

There is also an [interview](#) with Sharon James on her book.

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Religious Education and British Values

CviE has been alerted to a question, asked in January 2022 by Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP (Labour - Slough), to the Secretary of State for Education “what recent steps has his Department taken to support the teaching of religious education in schools?”.

The reply by Robin Walker, Minister of State (Education) included the following statement “The government firmly believes in the importance of good quality religious education (RE) as it is essential in developing children’s knowledge of British values and traditions, and those of other countries”. The full reply can be found by [clicking here](#).

Sadly, the reply focuses merely on British values and cultural traditions and seems to be a long way from the statement, in the “[Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010](#)”, page 7:

“Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It can develop pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and worldviews that offer answers to questions such as these.”

Parents may also find the House of Commons Library Briefing “[Religious Education in Schools \(England\)](#)” a useful reference point.

The Queen’s Accession and the Platinum Jubilee

The House of Commons Library has published an Insight, “[The Queen’s Accession and the Platinum Jubilee](#)” which explains what happened when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne on 6 February 1952. The Insight contains a number of links to original and other relevant documents. This item has been included in this copy of Education Matters as it may be of interest to teachers who have an interest in history and/or constitutional matters.

NOTE: Although we make every effort to ensure these links mentioned are accurate, up to date and relevant, CViE cannot take responsibility for content and pages maintained by external providers.

CALENDAR

School calendar and 'Awareness Days'

Those involved in education are no doubt aware of the proliferation of events and ‘celebrations’ that are part of the school calendar - often imposed upon schools. CViE has taken the opportunity to try to identify what events might take place in

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schools. This has been done to alert parents so that they can ask the question “what is covered in the events that happen within school and what this means for their children?”

In the past CViE has reported actions that parents have taken when they discovered what their schools were doing - we would be pleased to hear from parents, in complete confidence, of issues that they have to deal with in schools so that these can be shared to encourage parents and others to stand fast.

CViE would take this opportunity to highlight forthcoming events that may be of interest:

February 2022

LGBT+ History Month (February 1-28)
National Heart Month (February 1-28)
Children's Mental Health Week (February 7-13)
Safer Internet Day (February 8)
Random Acts of Kindness Week (February 13-19)
World Day of Social Justice (February 20)
Fairtrade Fortnight (February 22-March 7)
Stand up to Bullying (February 25)

Parents could ask the school for a calendar of events and what is being covered, and it would be interesting to know whether schools are forthcoming with this information.

Twinkl produces resources for use in schools and has an area of their website with a list of events each month of the year, together with information and resources of what the event covers.

Please feel free to contact us regarding any points in this section at enquiries@cvie.org.uk.

Finally

As we move through the spring term, do pray for those who are, in whatever capacity, involved in education.

Do pray for the CViE Trustees and Tim Wills (Business and Development Manager) as we seek the Lord's will for the Charity and that the Lord will continue to supply our need in “equipping Christians to stand fast on the Word of God in education today”.