

Education Matters

ISSUE 22.4

(April/May 2022)

Welcome to this latest edition of CViE *Education Matters*, designed to provide parents and those interested in education with current “snippets” of information that might be of help in understanding and dealing with parenting and educational issues. In this edition we cover the following:

EDUCATION

- Department for Education (DfE) - Climate change initiatives
- 10 top tips for parents to support children to read
- Everything you need to know about SATS
- Top tips for exam preparation this summer
- Types of schools
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PARENTING

- Smacking ban in England?
- Should I Watch This? 5 Questions for the Discerning Viewer

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- What should Christians make of the metaverse?
- Should I Watch This? 5 Questions for the Discerning Viewer
- Solomon on smart phones
- Reflections on “12 ways your phone is changing you”

SOMETHING FOR CHILDREN

- TBS quizzes

INVITATION

- **Truth in Science - Supporters’ Meeting**
Saturday, 28 May 2022, Reigate Baptist Church

We would also bring your attention to recent posts on the CViE website:

[Asking the right questions on gender identity in education](#)

[AFTER MONDAY: Basic Schooling at Home](#)

[Digital dangers: “Be sober, be vigilant”](#)

[CViE on climate change, circa 2007](#)

[‘Education Matters’, Issue 22.3 \(March 2022\)](#)

Click [here](#) for all CViE blog posts.

Christian Values in Education

On behalf of the CViE trustees -
With Christian regards,

Michael
(M Ridout, Chair CViE)

EDUCATION

Department for Education (DfE) - Climate change initiatives

The DfE have identified that “Education is one of the key tools we have in the fight against climate change”. As a result, they have announced “a range of new measures that will mean young people are able to learn more about the natural world around them than ever before and understand how they can play a part in making sure future generations can enjoy a cleaner, safer, greener world”.

Measures that are being taken as part of the DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy include the introduction of the new Natural History GCSE that will enable young people to explore the world by learning about organisms and environments, environmental and sustainability issues, and gain a deeper knowledge of the natural world around them.

This GCSE is under development with a view to it being taught to pupils aged 14 to 16 by 2025, and it will be interesting to see syllabus and what the pupils will be taught. (Paul Buckingham, writing in the TCW May 11, 2022, shared correspondence that he had with the DfE over this proposed GCSE and whether it was in reality a course about climate change. The article can be found by [clicking here](#)).

The National Education Nature Park is another DfE initiative that will encourage nurseries, schools, colleges and universities to think of the land they occupy as one whole ‘park’ with vast potential to help halt the decline of biodiversity in the country. Additionally, it is claimed that the Climate Leaders Awards will help children and young people develop their skills and knowledge and biodiversity and sustainability and celebrate and recognise their work in protecting the local environment.

This information has been extracted from a DfE blog post which can be found by [clicking here](#).

The primary challenge for Christian parents will be to ensure children are grounded in a Christian worldview of God as the creator of the heavens and the earth and made aware of our responsibility to steward the creation whilst the earth remaineth (Genesis 8:22); as opposed to a secular worldview which sees mankind as being responsible for the continuation of the planet. It is also appreciated that this is a complicated topic upon which many respected scientists vary in their opinion as to the extent of the problem.

10 top tips for parents to support children to read

This post by the DfE is based on advice to help primary age children read at home. The 10 tips include: Encourage your child to read, read aloud regularly, encourage reading choice, read together, create a comfortable environment, make use of your local library, talk about books, bring reading to life, make reading active and engage your child in reading in a way that suits them. The post can be found by [clicking here](#).

When you read the 10 tips, perhaps it is easy to think of our own childhood when books were an important part of growing up and indeed how reading is an essential life skill for the world of work. The challenge today for some parents is perhaps finding the time, amongst the busyness of life, to read with their children and/or competing with the digital/visual distractions that entertain young minds.

CViE, if the Lord will, are looking to continue the 'Cultivate a reading habit' scheme at the forthcoming National Conference and trust that the means will be provided to finance the scheme for another year.

Everything you need to know about SATS

This month (May) most pupils in year six will take the key stage 2 (KS2) national curriculum tests – commonly known as SATs.

These tests, alongside teacher assessment of English writing and science, are used to measure school performance and to make sure individual pupils have the support that they need as they move into secondary school. SATs were suspended for the last two years now are being reinstated without any adaptations. The DfE have published a blog on "The Education Hub" website providing information for parents and what SATs involve and where they can find more information about what is involved with these tests and guidance on what to do if the child is experiencing anxiety and stress ahead of their SAT the blog post can be found by [clicking here](#).

On May 11, 2022, the House Of Commons Library published a research briefing "Assessment and testing in primary education in England" which provides more detailed information on SATs for those interested in this aspect of the education of children in primary schools. The briefing can be found by [clicking here](#).

Top tips for exam preparation this summer

This year students will sit exams set and assessed by exam boards. For many young people this will be the first time that they have taken formal exams and assessments. The DfE published a blogpost on its Education Hub that provides help for students in their exam preparation and may well be of interest to parents.

The post provides information on the exam arrangements for this year with links to the Ofqual website and the Covid measures that will be in place during exams this summer. Information is also provided on revision techniques, planning and the need to keep a balance. This latter point is an important one as exams can be a stressful time for both students and parents especially when expectations are placed on those taking exams which they feel they may not be able to meet. The post can be found by [clicking here](#).

How prayer is needed, individually and by the church, to remember those taking exams and their families and that they, in turn, may be help to lay all things before the Lord.

(Since writing the above note, there has been an article in The Times (4 May 2022) entitled "Pens down, pupils - A-levels and GCSEs could go paperless. In short, the article identifies that the exams watchdog 'Ofqual' will explore the use of online adaptive testing, with digital exams adjust to suit a candidate's ability in real time - it will be interesting to see what this means in practice. The other reason put forward for the changes is the overhead for administering exams and that the AQA examining body has identified that the 12 million papers they handle every year create 600 tons of CO₂, hopefully this will not be done to the detriment to those sitting exams. The article goes on to note that the Chief Executive of the AQA said "he did not want exams moved entirely online because it would damage handwriting skills" - no further comment! The article can be found by [clicking here](#).)

Types of schools

The "Types of schools" webpage is a useful reference point that explains the types of schools available for 5 to 16-year-olds whether state schools (funded by local authorities or directly from government) or private (independent schools. This may be of interest to parents trying to understand the state system options, the website can be found by [clicking here](#).

As CViE has previously stated, parents are responsible for the education of their children and this responsibility includes how, what and where children are taught.

Political impartiality in schools

[CViE, in Education Matters 22.3](#) (March 2022) highlighted the recent DfE guidance on "Political impartiality in schools" and the useful publication produced by the Coalition for Marriage (C4M) that provides analysis of the DfE guidance with particular reference to Christian parents and teachers.

In April 2022, The Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman speaking at a conference organised by the Office for Students, urged teachers to take particular care when speaking about hot button topics such as gender and race. She also

pointed out the need for schools, colleges and universities to find the balance between being branded intolerant on the one hand and being slammed as woke on the other.

More detail can be found on the Christian Institute website where there is also a [commentary](#) by John Denning on what was said by Amanda Spielman.

As previously reported, it is important for Christian parents to be aware of guidance pertaining to what should be taught in schools and how it should be taught, so that they can make their case from a reasoned position when raising concerns. There are many issues within the curriculum that they have a 'political' dimension such as historical characters, climate change and lifestyle preferences. Fundamentally, schools must not promote partisan political views in teaching and should offer a balanced presentation of opposing views when political issues are brought to the attention of pupils. For anyone wishing to gain a quick overview of political impartiality in schools then the four-page DfE Political Impartiality Guidance Pamphlet is a good starting point and can be found by [clicking here](#).

Something to reflect on

Nicki Truesdell has published an interesting blog post "An Education Without God Is Not a Complete Education" on the Expository Parenting Ministries website.

The author opens their blog post with the following: "I've heard it said that a Christian would never send their child to a school where mathematics was not taught; if true, why do Christians send their children to schools where God is not taught? I think it's because they feel that an education without God is neutral. But this could not be farther from the truth.

A complete education examines all aspects of life: mathematics, astronomy, the animal kingdom, human anatomy, history, government, philosophy, and languages. But most of these have been disconnected from God (and each other), repackaged as separate "school subjects," and delivered in textbook form. For Christians, this means that everything in our created world is presented to their children without mention of the Creator".

The author then goes on to write about "God in History", and raises the question "Do schoolchildren today read the heart-breaking and heroic stories from Fox's Book of Martyrs?"

Equally, where do children gain their understanding of God in the history of this country and the world?

Although written from the author's own viewpoint, there are some interesting reflections for parents and others interested in the education of children to consider.

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

TECHNOLOGY

What should Christians make of the metaverse?

For many of us, the word “metaverse” may have very little meaning yet it is a word that will become more prominent as the digital world ‘advances’.

One definition of the “metaverse” is: “a set of virtual spaces where you can create and explore with other people who aren’t in the same physical space as you. You’ll be able to hang out with friends, work, play, learn, shop, create and more. It’s not necessarily about spending more time online — it’s about making the time you do spend online more meaningful”. Even in this definition there are worrying words such as “virtual spaces” implying no physical reality and making time spent online “more meaningful” when, from experience, being online can become a time distractor and for the Christian an ‘environment’ full of hidden dangers.

The Modern Media Committee of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations (MMC) have posted a link to a web post that explores the impact of the technology that separates body and mind. As the MMC points out “What should the church and Christians think of these things? Following is one viewpoint, among several similar perspectives, suggesting that we must be watchful and use great discernment with this new wave of augmented and virtual reality technologies. **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour** (1 Peter 5:8). **Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober** (1 Thessalonians 5:6). The article can be found on the MMC website by [clicking here](#).

Should I Watch This? 5 Questions for the Discerning Viewer

The Gospel Coalition (TGC) posted a blog post on their website in May 2020 that identifies five questions that should be posed when we come to view anything on the Internet. The questions are:

1. What makes you asked the question?
2. What’s the best argument for watching it?
3. Who is making the compelling argument?
4. What would Jesus do?
5. What does your Christian community say?

(Although the article focuses on ‘streamable content’ which contains many dangers that we may keep ourselves from physically and would not associate with, yet online there may be temptation to click the mouse button.)

Equally, it may be 'harmless' general interest videos that may be available on the Internet yet what of the time spent on watching these at the expense of our Christian walk.)

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

Solomon on smart phones

In this blog post on the Reformed Perspective Canada website, the author considers the warnings given by Solomon to his son on the wiles and temptations of the adulteress. The author then makes the following observation: "The path of adultery for many young, modern, tech-savvy Christians is the Internet. And the woman along that path who is calling your name, looking for youths who lack judgment, leading the way to death, is Internet pornography".

As was once said "there are no new sins, the Internet makes it easier to commit them" and the devil knows how to entrap the unwary and like so many sins, pornography can become addictive and impact on behaviour and relationships. The mercy is there is "mercy" and the Lord is able to bring back His wandering sheep in confession of this sin and repentance. Scriptural references are NIV and you may need your Bible nearby to cross-reference the wording to that you are more familiar with, the blog post can be found by [clicking here](#).

Reflections on "12 ways your phone is changing you"

This blog post also on the Reformed Perspective Canada website and the author makes the observation: "Despite the fact that technology is a gift from God – the product of our inventiveness as creatures made in God's image – our use of this particular piece of technology is making us less like Christ. It's time that we took a good look at ourselves and reclaimed the use of our phones for good purposes".

The author then considers five headings:

1. Always available distraction,
2. Ever present peer pressure,
3. Distance diminishes consideration,
4. Privacy brings temptation and
5. Algorithms feed us just one side.

Under each of the headings there are some very useful observations for the reader to reflect upon.

The blog post also refers to Tony Reinke's book [12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You](#), published in 2017 but still very relevant today. At the end of the blog post there is a short video highlighting the points made in the book.

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

PARENTING

Smacking ban in England?

There has recently been mentioned in the press of the Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza's, support for a ban on smacking children like that in Wales and Scotland. It is also reported that the Education Secretary has rejected calls for a ban on parents smacking children in England. This is an emotive subject and often words such as abuse and 'heavy handedness' are used. In a sermon, preached in 2021, Roy Mohon highlights the role of parents in nurturing their children within a framework of "Care, Instruction and Discipline (CID)". The word discipline can be used emotively in focusing on punishment as opposed to Biblical instruction, **Train up a child in the way he should go; And when he is old he will not depart from it.** (Proverbs 22:6). Although physical correction may be needed in bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, this will be done in love. There is an article on the "Got Questions" website titled "How should Christians discipline their children?" It has been written as an answer, from a biblical perspective, to address this important question. Bible references are provided to help the reader turn to their Bible as they reflect on what has been written, the article can be found by [clicking here](#).

Anne Farmer has written a common-sense article titled "Tackle real child abuse, not smacking" (TCW, March 22 2022). Within the article the point is made "It is hard enough to bring up children today, trying to shield them from inappropriate influences in the media, wokeism and premature sexualisation in the classroom, and attempts to frighten them with 'green' propaganda about humans killing the planet – not to mention the unintended irony of solicitous enquiries about their mental health – without dumping yet another burden on parents in the shape of possible legal action if someone reports them for giving their children the lightest of taps, on the basis that if they did it to an adult they would be committing an assault". The writer also touches on the sensitive issue of the emotional impact of children being placed in daycare in their formative years. The article can be found by [clicking here](#).

The press article referred to above can be found by [clicking here](#) and the sermon can be [found here](#).

SOMETHING FOR CHILDREN

TBS quizzes

For the last few years, the TBS has annually created a children's quiz. Once completed children can return the quizzes to their local TBS branch and receive a

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prize of a hardback Royal Ruby Bible or they may choose to grant a Bible to someone in need.

This year, in recognition of the Platinum Jubilee, the TBS have published two children's quizzes (Junior and Senior) on the theme of Kings and Queens in the Bible. For those returning their correct answers to the local TBS office before 31 December 2022 can elect to receive a Commemoratives Ruby Bible for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee or a Daily Light Pictorial Paperback or a copy of the Metrical Psalms medium print or send to a child in Kenya a Commemoratives Ruby Bible for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Junior Quiz can be found by [clicking here](#) and the Senior Quiz can be found by [clicking here](#).

Children's books

Our attention has also been brought to the following children's books that may be of interest. (Please note that CViE have not read these books in detail and any decision to purchase is that of parents)

Corrie ten Boom: The Courageous Woman and The Secret Room

The name Corrie ten Boom is associated with the book The Hiding Place which recounts how the ten Boom family hid Jewish families from the Nazis during the Second World War before the family were trapped and arrested by the authorities. A book has now been published Corrie ten Boom: The Courageous Woman and The Secret Room intended for reading to children aged 4-5 and read by children above this age. A review of the book can be found by [clicking here](#) and further details are available on the [publishers website](#).

Polly and the Screen Time Overload

This recently published picture book, by Betsy Childs Howard, is based on story about the little girl Polly who visits her grandparents farm every year until she gets a new tablet the present. Instead of playing outside and seeing what is happening on the farm, she spends all day inside with her tablet. The book uses simple language and beautiful illustrations to introduce children ages 3–7 to the idea that they need self-control and discernment in the way they use and enjoy technology. Although American in origin, the book's message transcends the Atlantic, the book is published by Crossway and there is a read aloud video of the book which can be found by [clicking here](#).

Both these books are available from [The Christian Bookshop Ossett](#) or your local book supplier.

INVITATION: Truth in Science - Supporters' Meeting

Truth in Science has very kindly extended a welcome to those with an interest in CViE to attend their Supporters' Meeting at Reigate Baptist Church Saturday 28, May 2022 11 am -4:30 pm.

The reason for TiS running this meeting is the sad fact that Christians are becoming increasingly confused about how God made the world. Many are turning to liberal theology's idea of God using evolution as a tool of Creation. This implies no historical Adam and no Fall, but recent research into soft tissue in dinosaur bones has offered scientific evidence clearly supporting that dinosaurs died more recently, probably in a worldwide flood.

The day will involve presentations from Andy McIntosh, Steve Taylor and Stuart Burgess, together with a programme for children for 5-8 years and 9-12 years

There will also be a wide range of resources available from Answers in Genesis and Day One Publications. Attendees are advised to bring a packed lunch, tea and coffee are free and there is ample free parking.

Further details can be found by [clicking here](#).

CALENDAR

School calendar and 'Awareness Days'

CViE would take this opportunity to highlight forthcoming events that might take place in schools to alert parents about which of interest. CViE has taken the opportunity to try to identify what events so that they can ask the question "what is covered in the events that happen within school and what this means for their children?"

JUNE

Global Day of Parents	June 1
Pride Month	June 1-30
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month	June 1-30
The Big Lunch	June 5-6
World Oceans Day	June 8
Learning Disability Week	June 14-20
Clean Air Day	June 17
Celebration of the Solstice	June 21
Thank A Teacher Day	June 23

JULY

World Population Day	July 11
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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. Please feel free to contact us regarding any points in this section at enquiries@cvie.org.uk.

CViE is thankful to have hosted our first 2 Online Meet-Ups ('Home Education – Staying the Course', 'State Education – Making Your Views Known') and are pleased to be planning our next Meet-up, 'State Education - Making a Difference, Becoming a School Governor' (details TBA).

FINALLY

In preparing this issue of Education Matters, we are conscious that bringing up children seems to be increasingly challenging with all the pressures to conform to a humanistic worldview. Many of the challenges could not perhaps been imagined previously and in seeking information that may be of help to others, there is also a need for discernment where there may be views that do not align with our own. The Lord grant us wisdom to live in the day in which He has placed us and to do all to the honour and glory of His Name.

Do pray help might be given to Tim Wills and the CViE Trustees as we continue to make arrangements for the National Conference on Saturday, 24 September 2022 - further details on the [Events Page](#).

NOTE: Although we make every effort to ensure these links mentioned are accurate, up-to-date and relevant, CViE cannot take responsibility for content, information, religious views, opinions and pages on third-party websites.