

Welcome to this issue of CViE *Education Matters*, for Winter 2023.

Education Matters is designed to provide parents and those interested in education with current “snippets” and links to information that might be of help in understanding and dealing with educational issues and bringing up children in a society that, on the whole, does not hold any respect for biblical teaching.

Please contact us at enquiries@cvie.org.uk, if there are topics that you think would be interesting to cover in future editions of *Education Matters*.

In this edition we cover the following:

EDUCATION

Government publications:

- Teacher strikes: Everything you need to know about strike action in schools
- Studying maths to 18 – what you need to know
- How we are helping to inspire primary school children about their future careers
- Safeguarding in English schools
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- Protecting children and young people from the dangers of the Internet
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RECENT BLOG POSTS AT THE CViE WEBSITE

Journey into Home Education: A Personal Story (PART 2)

Nurturing speech development in children

CViE Update – December 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF CVIE

Dear Friends and Supporters of Christian Values in Education,

Welcome to the first edition of Education Matters of 2023.

With so many challenging topics included, I highly recommend this issue to you in ensuring that you are informed of legislation, curriculum changes and parental responsibilities. How often the need to be informed can impact our thought process when an issue arises, therefore being up-to-date is even more important.

As parents, we have been given a responsibility to raise our children in the fear and nurture of the Lord and, if ever there is a need to be vigilant, it is today. The impact of social media and online addiction are huge problems and a risk to all of us. We have a great need to consider what our children are exposed to and to ensure that they are appropriately aware. Whilst schools seek to take their responsibilities very seriously, our own need to be informed is compromised if we do not speak to our children and seek to guide and protect them. The section on 'Technology and its Implications' is especially noteworthy.

Similarly, the shocking rise in online pornography is covered in 'Defend Young Minds'. We cannot push away this topic, however unseemly or distressing it may be to us. We are reminded of the solemn words in Romans 1 that **God gave them over to a reprobate mind**, and where Paul also mentions earlier in the chapter, **I would not have you ignorant, brethren**. It is an enormous problem in our generation and one that needs to be confronted and primarily by us as parents.

As parents, grandparents, friends and educators, we can often feel overwhelmed by the age in which we find ourselves. Yet we ignore these issues at our peril. We pray for each of you that, whilst we feel our inadequacy, we can find that very present help in the Lord, who alone sustains and gives us wisdom for such a time as this.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

James 5:8

On behalf of the CViE Trustees,

With Christian greetings and prayerful good wishes –

Dan Sayers
Chair

EDUCATION

Government publications

The following publications regarding education have been recently published by the government. Some of the topics have been prominent in the news, others have not. These items have been included to alert and equip parents and others interested in education as to what is happening in the wider world of state education.

Teacher strikes: Everything you need to know about strike action in schools

This blog post on 'The Education Hub' published by the Department for Education provides information on teacher strikes that will sadly be taking place during February and March 2023. No doubt schools and colleges will be informing parents about what is happening and making suitable provision for the pupils and students under their charge.

More detail can be found here: [Teacher strikes: Everything you need to know about strike action in schools](#)

A House of Commons Library Research Briefing was published on Friday, 27 January 2023 providing further information on the planned strike action in schools across the UK, including key dates. More detail can be at: [School strike action in the UK](#).

Studying maths to 18 – what you need to know

On the 4th January 2023, the Prime Minister announced a plan for students in England to study some form of maths to 18 years to ensure that they leave school better equipped for the jobs of the future.

Further detail will be set out in due course. It will be interesting to see what strategies are proposed to implement this plan. Although the initiative may be well-intended, the challenge will be its implementation, especially in considering the impact on students, teachers and schools/colleges.

More details can be found on the DfE 'Education Hub' by clicking [Studying maths to 18 – what you need to know](#).

How we are helping to inspire primary school children about their future careers

This post on the DfE 'Education Hub' provides an overview of a new careers programme that will encourage primary school children to think about future jobs while nurturing aspirations and challenging stereotypes.

(Without sounding alarmist, it would be interesting to know what is contained in the words "challenging stereotypes" and how this aligns with the biblical distinction between the roles of men and women?)

The blog post also notes that “From 1 January 2023, young people will also benefit from strengthened careers advice through a change in the law that will see all year 8-13 pupils have at least six opportunities to meet a range of providers of technical education.”

More detail can be found at [How we are helping to inspire primary school children about their future careers.](#)

Safeguarding in English schools

The House of Commons Research Briefing *Safeguarding in English schools* provides information on the safeguarding duties of English schools, governing bodies and staff, including during recruitment, and in dealing with allegations.

The Research Briefing also provides information on “Child on child sexual violence and harassment”. It is to be regretted that such things should be covered within safeguarding documents, however, the issue of “[Sexual harassment in education](#)” is a real one. As evidenced by the OFSTED review published in June 2021.

More detail can be found at [Safeguarding in English schools.](#)

The issue is not only whether schools have policies on these sensitive matters, but also whether children and young people are in an environment where they can discuss matters of concern with their parents/guardians.

School attendance in England

The House of Commons Research Briefing *School attendance in England* provides an overview of school attendance rules in England, and concerns about increased persistent and severe absence since the Covid pandemic. The Research Briefing points out that “Parents in England are responsible for ensuring that their child receives an appropriate full-time education. When a child is registered at school, parents are responsible for securing their child’s regular attendance”.

The Research Briefing is very comprehensive and provides a useful reference point on the requirements of school attendance in England.

More detail can be found at [School attendance in England.](#)

Complaints about schools in England

This House of Commons Library note *Complaints about schools in England* provides an overview of how to complain about schools in general, school admissions, exclusions and special educational needs provision.

The document is a very useful overview of the routes for complaining about concerns that parents and/or individuals may have regarding education in schools. However, having a complaints procedure is one thing, often how the complaint is articulated will have an

influence on how it is received. For Christians, if we feel after prayer there is a need to complain then we need to conduct ourselves according to Biblical teaching.

More detail can be found at [Complaints about schools in England](#).

TECHNOLOGY

Gaming Alone: Helping the Generation of Young Men Captivated and Isolated by Video Games

In this podcast from The Gospel Coalition, Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra examines why boys are more likely than girls to be addicted to video games and why playing with people online doesn't mean you have more friends. Consideration is also given to the impact video games have on the witness of Christians. The podcast is 56 minutes long and if this subject is an issue for you then it is worth listening to. An edited transcript of the podcast is available.

One particular part of the podcast of interest was discussion around addiction and what happens inside our brains to cause addiction. Although the description may be written in a simple way, it is particularly useful to help understand why people become addicted to gaming and not to other things such as alcohol, drugs, gambling and pornography. Paul's words in Ephesians 6:11-12 concern the need to put on the whole armour of God in order to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, knowing that it is in our minds and thoughts where the often devil works. Peter warns in 1 Peter 5:8 of the need to be sober and vigilant -- it is when we are caught unawares that damage is done. The following is an unedited extract from the podcast:

"What makes anything addictive, it's a stimulus that triggers a dopamine response. And then you know, because of how our bodies are made, we want more of the stimulus. And because of the dopamine hit, and we're like, okay, and especially with video games, you know, sometimes that's a pretty easy dopamine hit to get. So then you can just press the button over and over again, and you get there and all of a sudden, you know that you're trapped, and you've wired your brain in such a way. So that's like one of the few ways you can actually get the dopamine hits, so you can't like get it normally anymore, and then you end up with problems."

"And when boys choose games over and over, they're reinforcing neural pathways in their brains. They learn how to respond rapidly to large amounts of incoming information, which is good training for anyone who wants to be an air traffic controller. But it's not great training for boys who need to practice focusing their attention on a single purpose, like reading a textbook, focusing on a task or listening to a teacher. And it's not great for learning off-screen skills like navigating face-to-face conversations, finishing a boring job or shooting a ball into a basketball hoop. While video games do hone digital hand-eye coordination, that doesn't translate off-screen. In other words, playing a video game doesn't help you catch a ball or spot a moving target in real life. Unfortunately, when those neural pathways become too entrenched, they're almost impossible to reuse this. None of these things are secrets. Well, not everyone has studied the research. Anyone who has experience with a boy and a video game knows there's potential for trouble. I have yet to meet a mother who is really happy

with the way her son interacts with video games. My husband and I were so unimpressed with the effect video games were having on our 12 year old, we banned them altogether."

The podcast can be found at [Gaming Alone: Helping the Generation of Young Men Captivated and Isolated by Video Games](#).

Lockdowns linked to tenfold rise in child sex imagery

This was the title of a stark news item on the BBC website and contribution to the Radio 4 Today programme on Friday, 27 January 2023. The article concerns data produced by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) regarding the increase of child sexual abuse imagery available on the Internet and social media during lockdown and how predators took advantage of this situation.

As has been commented, no parent would let a stranger into their children's bedroom yet how many parents know who their children are communicating with on this screen?

As mentioned, the news item makes stark and sober reading and can be found by [clicking here](#).

Protecting children and young people from the dangers of the Internet

CViE has taken the opportunity in this *Education Matters* to bring to your attention two websites that deal with topics relating to pornography and sexual exploitation. It is appreciated that these are sensitive issues however they are real ones. It has been commented that there are no new sins yet the devil uses means to make it easier to commit sins - the Internet and social media being examples of this.

Lovewise, in an article "[Everyone's Invited](#)" and the end of sexual abuse" (April 2021), provided a very useful synopsis in answering the question "How do we find ourselves in such a tragic state?" The answer is attributed to the disengagement from the God-honouring and wise coupling of commitment and intimacy within the marriage (between one man and one woman) state only. Three immediate influences were identified: normalisation of underage sex, pornography use and feminist and transgender movements.

Defend Young Minds

Defend Young Minds (DYM) is an organisation based in the USA concerned with helping "caring adults empower young children with the information, skills and mindsets they need to defend themselves against pornography and reject all forms of sexual exploitation. In this way kids can grow up unburdened by addiction and objectification to enjoy healthy relationships and successful lives".

The DYM website is a very useful starting point for parents and others concerned with the dangers of pornography and sexual exploitation. Whether we like it or not pornography, since the availability of the Internet, is pervasive. Prior to the Internet, obtaining such materials would have meant having to physically visit an establishment selling such things or using mail order. This may well have meant that materials could not be hidden whereas now these

things can be accessed in the confines of the home. As a general observation, we may think that we can delete our search history yet these things cannot be hidden from God.

The following links have been made to the DYM as a help for those who may be seeking material in dealing with protecting the children:

How Do Kids Find Porn? Top 10 Ways in 2023.

This web page is a very useful starting point in addressing this sensitive subject. The webpage shares how children and young people can find pornography - accidentally or on-purpose. Some of the ways may be apparent and others not so apparent! Central to dealing with this topic is, as DYM identify:

“We want to stress that the two best ways to defend your child against the harms of pornography are -

1. Develop a strong and loving bond with your child so they know you are someone with whom it's safe to discuss difficult topics.
2. Talk with your child about the harms of pornography early and often. The goal is to start talking with them about it before they are exposed.”

More detail can be found at [How Do Kids Find Porn? Top 10 Ways in 2023](#).

Prepare & Prevent: When Should I Start the Conversation About Online Safety?

DYM have produced a 16-minute video intended to help parents deal with the challenges involved in talking to their children about online safety. It is recognised that this is not an easy task especially concerning topics such as pornography. It is hoped that this video will be a help to parents and others who are dealing with this challenging situation.

More detail can be found at [Prepare & Prevent: When Should I Start the Conversation About Online Safety?](#). (scroll down the webpage)

Defend Young Minds: Guides

DYM have published a number of guides to help parents and others understand the dangers of sexual material on the Internet. Some of these are free and others are priced publications.

More detail can be found at [Defend Young Minds: Guides](#).

DYM have also produced two books: “Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds” (Ages 3-6) and “Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today’s Young Kids” (Ages 7-12). CViE have seen copies of these books and if anyone is interested in producing a review of them, then please contact us at enquiries@cvie.org.uk. The books are also obtainable through Christian bookshops or online retailers.

The above links are only a sample of the materials available on the Defend Young Minds website. The value of the website is that it is designed for parents and others who are

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concerned about the impact of inappropriate sexual content on the minds and future well-being of children. Do take the opportunity to visit the [Defend Young Minds](#) website.

LovewiseOnline

LovewiseOnline was launched in 2018 with the key aim of encouraging young people to make God-honouring choices regarding relationships, marriage and sex. CViE were encouraged to hear of this development and published a post at the time "[Spotlight on: Lovewiseonline.org](#)" to make supporters aware of this very helpful development.

CViE has taken this opportunity to highlight the following posts on the LovewiseOnline website, as being useful starting points in dealing from a biblical perspective with the dangers posed by pornography. As can be seen from the links below, the posts highlight the dangers of watching pornography spiritually, mentally and physically.

[Pornography \(part 1\): Damage to our relationship with God](#) - The post opens with the following statement "At the heart of the problem with pornography is the fact that it promotes sexual arousal outside of a relationship, which has many dangerous consequences". The writer then goes on to examine how the sin pornography damages our relationship with God and distorts God's design for sexual intimacy within marriage.

[Pornography \(part 2\): Spoiling future relationships](#) - The post opens with the statement "Pornography cuts up a person by separating the object of lust from the reality of the person – their lives, thoughts, needs and situation. When we separate the act of sex from real people and real relationships, it can distort and confuse our minds. The consequences are that we have distorted expectations and behaviour when it comes to making healthy, long-lasting relationships" and, in particular, how those caught up in this sin see women as something inferior to them.

[Pornography \(part 3\): Effects on behaviour and mental health](#) - The post opens with the statement "An emphasis on physical appearance is prevalent in today's culture: in films, magazines and advertising. Such an emphasis will make it harder to establish good relationships and to treat the opposite sex with love and respect. Pornography gives unrealistic expectations of what people should look like. It can lead both girls and boys to have anxieties and feel under pressure to have a certain body image. Pornography encourages a self-centred attitude that other people should provide you with entertainment and enjoyment without you having to put in any effort or make any sacrifice".

[Pornography \(part 4\): A cause of abuse within society](#) - This short post exposes the pornography industry for what it is - an industry driven by money to make large profits with little concern for those involved in the industry and those addicted to watching it. (See 1 Timothy 6:10)

The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians sets out the heinous sins prevalent in the city of Corinth (the same sins that are rampant in society today) and pens the words **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.** (1 Corinthians 6:11). The following

testimony, on the Focus on the Family website, makes interesting reading and may be of help in dealing with the besetting sin of pornography, "[How God's grace saved this man from a pornography addiction](#)".

ETHICAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES

Children, like marriage, are an endangered species

In this article Anne Farmer highlights that since records began in 1845, most children are now born outside marriage, based on figures from the Office for National Statistics. The author identifies, "In England and Wales, 51.3 per cent of 624,828 live births in 2021 were to women not married or in a civil partnership, while 48.7 per cent of babies were born in wedlock." (It would be interesting to see how many people recognise the word "wedlock" - the state of being married and by inference "until death us do part".) The article also makes reference to societal changes regarding marriage and the 10 million children killed before birth since 1967 - those who take a pro-choice view may take umbrage over the word "killed", however, that does not alter the statistic.

For Christian parents, the challenge is to ensure their children have a right view of marriage and the unborn life from a biblical perspective as they will not be receiving such a view from society around them. The article can be found at [Children, like marriage, are an endangered species](#).

We would take this opportunity to remind you of the CViE publication "[Holding Fast to Holy Matrimony: The Excellency of Marriage](#)" which sets out a biblical view of marriage and the dangers of relationships that are not holy matrimony. Copies of the publication can be found by clicking on the link provided or contacting enquiries@cvie.org.uk.

Abortion, the *Imago Dei*, and Love

In early 2022, CViE published two posts Abortion: The Impact on Lives ([Part 1](#)) and ([Part 2](#)). The posts considered the available abortion statistics and highlighted the following "Hidden behind these statistics is the governmental, societal and economic pressure placed upon women and their husbands or partners to abort 'unwanted children' – let us never forget that the life in the womb is a child not-yet born. Abortion is contrary to the Word of God yet 'medical' pressure is brought to bear on both Christians and non-Christians alike, especially under the guise of 'abnormalities'".

This article "Abortion, the *Imago Dei*, and Love" appeared in TableTalk in January 2023 and has been included as a result of a recent request for a copy of the CViE publication [Abortion](#) to be given to a young person at college. The article is a very well written in both covering the Biblical position regarding abortion and the need to deal in love those who have been affected by this act. The author concludes the article by stating "But abortion is not just a policy or ideological debate; it is a deeply personal and spiritual issue in our communities, congregations, and families. And the only way forward is to speak the truth in love and be the Good Samaritan Christ calls us to be to everyone we encounter, for we are all made in His image."

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More detail can be found at [Abortion, the Imago Dei, and Love](#).

[The human tragedy of abortion: Garrett Kell has recently written an article “Wasn’t My Body, but It Was My Baby” in which the author very candidly sets out his experience of being party to the abortion of an ‘unwanted child’. The author’s contention is that a woman will claim that it is her body, however, the point made is that the baby within is that of the mother and the father. The author notes “Some choices leave scars; our abortion is certainly one of them. In the years since, our decision has given me more compassion toward those who face the fear of an unplanned pregnancy. And God has brought forgiveness and healing I don’t deserve.” The article can be found by [clicking here](#).]

[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, nor do we endorse all information, religious views or opinions posted on these third-party websites.]