

ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD

25 JUNE 2016

QUESTIONS – FIRST NOTICE PAPER

- 1) The Reverend Dean Henley (Amphill and Shefford Deanery) to ask the Revd Darren Collins – Chair, Diocesan Caribbean Links Group: -

“At the March 2016 synod I asked the Bishop of St. Albans about the homophobia in our Caribbean link dioceses (the Diocese of the Windward Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and St. Lucia; Guyana and Belize), and specifically their support for the criminalization of the LGBTQ communities in those countries. I was assured that the links group would address these concerns in the very near future.

Given that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other Primates of the Anglican Communion have censured Anglican Churches that support the criminalization of LGBTQ people; what steps have the group taken so far and propose to take in the future to address the homophobia in our link dioceses and will they consider terminating links with those dioceses who continue to advocate for and defend the criminalization of LGBTQ people?

The answer will be tabled at Synod in a Second Notice Paper.

- 2) The Reverend Dean Henley (Amphill and Shefford Deanery) to ask Mr David Morton Diocesan Director of Education:

“In May 2014 the Archbishop of Canterbury launched the Church of England’s national guidance for challenging homophobic bullying in its schools: Valuing all God’s Children – Guidance for Church of England Schools on Challenging Homophobic Bullying.

The report states:

“Schools can be among the most homophobic social spaces. Studies in a range of countries show that young people are more likely to experience homophobic bullying at school than in the home or community. As far as possible we need to ask questions within our Church schools to ensure that we are not turning a convenient blind-eye to institutional homophobia and allowing an unwelcoming social space for pupils to go unchallenged. (Defining terms p.8)”.

Recommendation 10 on p.4 of the Guidance reads:

“Diocesan Boards of Education and Diocesan Multi-Academy Trusts should monitor incidents of (homophobic) bullying in their schools and develop systems to monitor schools’ strategies for inclusion and bullying, supporting effective implementation”.

Can the Director detail how the Board of Education has implemented the recommendations of the 2014 report in its schools and the outcome of their monitoring of this issue?"

Mr David Morton, the Diocesan Director of Education, will respond:

"The Board of Education continues to support its schools in tackling bullying in all its forms. It undertakes this in a manner that complements the ongoing training programmes offered by the six Local Authorities within the diocese and independent organisations. Where required, face-to-face visits by an officer of the Schools Team are undertaken to ascertain what support the Board can offer a school to facilitate an improvement in provision.

Since the publication of Valuing All God's Children, the Board of Education has:

- held a discussion on the outcome of Valuing all God's Children at its meeting in October 2014;*
- paid for all its Section 48* inspectors to undertake training on homophobic bullying on 19 October 2015;*
- delivered Anti-Bullying training for schools entitled Valuing all God's Children on 15 March 2015;*
- scheduled further training to be run during the 2016-17 academic year;*
- monitored Ofsted and Section 48* reports for mentions of all bullying.*

In addition, the Diocesan RE Adviser attended Townsend School on 22 May 2015 where the Guest of Honour was Sir Ian McKellen. The day was planned to celebrate the unveiling of a revised "Respect for All" policy which underpins everything in the school. The revision included a specific reference to not abusing anyone because of their "gender or sexual orientation" and came about through the Student Voice at the school where students had been keen to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. This event was also attended by representatives of another Church of England secondary school."

**This refers to the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools.*