

**Report of the ‘Scoping Project’
on provision for supporting the spiritual and moral
development of students aged 16 to 19 studying in
colleges of further education.**

Roger Butler

**Report submitted to the Board of the Religious Education Council of England and
Wales, Sunday 25th October, 2009**

Author's Foreword

When I was asked to take on this project I was extremely reluctant so to do. My reluctance was not because I had any doubts about the importance of the subject I had been asked to look at, nor was it that I lacked enthusiasm for the opportunity to visit colleges of further education and learn about them. Rather, it was the extent of my ignorance about FE colleges. When I began this work in December 2008 I had never been inside of an FE college¹, had no idea about the range of work they did nor the ways in which they were governed, or financed.

Ten months on I am somewhat less ignorant but am still an outsider to the world of FE. Over the last ten months I have had six one-day visits to different colleges during which I have had opportunities to interview a range of managers, teachers, chaplains and students and I think I have the beginnings of an understanding of the world of FE. I have also had conversations with people involved in chaplaincy work or in other initiatives to develop what is sometimes referred to as 'faith, beliefs and values education' (FBVE) within colleges of FE. However, I am all too aware that I have been looking at and speaking with a particularly unrepresentative sample of institutions and people. But I remember once doing a course on ethnographic research in which we were encouraged to look for 'telling' examples rather than 'typical' examples and I hope that what is contained herein has a certain validity in drawing attention to some good practice and at the same time pointing out some challenges for those of us who would like to see more attention to FBVE within further education.

In terms of structure this report moves fairly quickly from an account of its origins to some recommendations. The basis on which those recommendations are made is what was learned through the six visits to FE colleges; interviews, more informal conversations and email exchanges with people involved in this area of work; and some reading of relevant previous reports and documentation: accounts of much of this activity is given in appendices, including notes of each of the college visits.

FE like education generally is beset by countless acronyms, abbreviations and specialist language that make communication simpler for the cognoscenti but can act as a barrier to the newcomer to the field. I have endeavoured to be sparing in my use of these terms, explain them when I first use them, and to gather them for easy reference in a glossary at the end of this document.

I am of course immensely grateful to all the people named in this document who made time in very busy lives to speak with me, allowed me into their workplaces, and in some cases responded to early partial drafts of this document. I alone am responsible for any errors that remain in this document, and the opinions voiced are of course mine.

Roger Butler, October 18th, 2009

¹ Since first writing this I realise it is not entirely true as I organised an exhibition on Buddhism in the late 1990s which was housed in an FE college in Ealing.

Contents

	Page Number
Title Page	1
Author's foreword	2
Contents	3
Background to project: Extent of the project	4
A difficult beginning	6
Selecting colleges to visit	8
Conclusions and recommendations from the study	9
Appendices	15
Appendix 1 - Visit to The College of North West London,	16
Appendix 2 - Visit to Stockton Riverside FE College	19
Appendix 3 - Visit to St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College	25
Appendix 4 - Visit to North Warwickshire and Hinckley College	28
Appendix 5 - Visit to College of North East London	32
Appendix 6 - Visit to North Devon College	35
Appendix 7 - Meetings and discussions about faith, beliefs and values education within further education	40
Appendix 8 - Revisiting the recommendations of Lat Blaylock's 2007 Report	42
Appendix 9 - What the experience of "spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" in schools may have to teach further education	45
Appendix 10 - Is an intelligible, workable consensus concerning 'spiritual and moral' now possible?	52
Martha Nussbaum's list of 'Central Human Capabilities'	60
Appendix 11 - Professor Stewart Sutherland's resumé of his keynote address:	62
Appendix 12 - Some information about AFAN	64
Appendix 13 - Glossary of acronyms and other terms used in this report	65
Appendix 14 - Documentation consulted in relation to this study	68
Appendix 15 - Bibliography: books and journal articles quoted or referred to in the report	69

Background to project

“scope - N Amer informal look at carefully; scan; assess; weigh up” - Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th Edition Revised 2006

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) has always devoted its attention primarily to the religious education delivered to children and young people in the state maintained schools of England and Wales. Religious education, as defined by the 1944 Education Act, included both religious instruction and collective worship and both have featured in the concerns of the REC. However, it would be true to say that the area of classroom teaching related to religion has become the predominant concern, while the continuing interest in ‘collective worship’ has expanded to incorporate aspects of pupils’ / students’¹ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, particularly the spiritual and moral components.

Over the last few years increasing numbers of students, at the end of their years of compulsory education, i.e. after year 11, have been choosing to continue their studies either in VI form colleges or other FE colleges (constitutionally a VI form college is an FE college). More recently, many schools and colleges have entered into partnership arrangements that have involved students from the ages of 14 to 16 in study arrangements that place them in FE colleges for part of their studies leading to GCSE or other qualifications at entry level or levels 1 and 2 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)². Such arrangements are likely to increase significantly in the near future, partly due to the new diplomas now coming on-line. However, there is no statutory duty on FE colleges to provide religious education as a curriculum subject (with the exception of VI form colleges which must provide RE if students ask for it), nor to provide collective worship, nor to promote students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is therefore the case that there is certainly an inconsistency, and perhaps an incoherence, in that state-funded education makes different and possibly incompatible requirements of different sorts of institutions that are sometimes expected to work collaboratively (e.g. how can a school meet a requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for students who spend all of some days on the site of a college of FE not under a similar requirement?)

Two years ago, in 2007, the REC received a report written by REC Board Member, Lat Blaylock, setting out “Proposals for developing Religious Education in 16-19 settings”. Among various recommendations made by that report was one that the REC should:

“undertake a new study in all FE and sixth form colleges and schools with sixth forms, of their policy and practice regarding RE, citizenship, values, beliefs and faith, SMSCD and community cohesion issues.”

In the event it has not proved feasible to undertake such a comprehensive research project but this, much smaller study, has been undertaken to update REC member bodies on the developing situation in FE colleges with regard to concerns about provision for education about, and education sensitive to, the faith, beliefs and values of students and staff within FE colleges and also of the working environments these FE students will enter into.

Extent of the project

Given the limits of time and funding set aside for this project it was agreed that it would be based primarily on:

1. visits to six FE colleges to learn at first hand about what is being offered to students, and what the perceptions of key staff are as to the possibilities for, and constraints upon, further developments

¹ For economy the word ‘student’ will hereafter be used to include children and young people of any age engaged in study in schools or colleges of FE.

² The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sets out the levels against which a qualification can be recognised in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; GCSE at grades A* to C is a level 2 qualification; GCSE at grades D to G is a level 1 qualification and qualifications below level 1 are designated ‘entry level.’ For a complete explanation go to <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/>

2. Interviews with a small number of individuals involved with organisations working to promote FBVE¹ in FE settings
3. Attendance at a day conference and some other meetings organised by the National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education (fbfe)

¹ Hereafter 'FBVE' - standing for "faith, beliefs and values education" - will be used often to designate all or any aspect of the of the areas of religious education, collective worship, chaplaincy work, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, except where context or clarity requires further specification

A difficult beginning

An obvious place to begin this project, in October 2008, seemed to be to read Lat Blaylock's report and recommendations for the REC, dated April 2007. This highlighted one immediate difficulty. Lat stresses the importance of:

"Multi agency working: The TDA (Training and Development Agency), the QIA (Quality) Improvement Agency), the LSC (Learning and Skills(Council), the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), the CEL (Centre for Excellence in Leadership) and other bodies and agencies of government are all implicated in the proposals made here. The REC will seek to work collaboratively with other organisations such as NEAFE / FIFEF as well. Local SACREs should also have a role to play in initiating shared activity. This paper does not suggest how these and other agencies might share the development work envisaged, but clearly the DfES is the key point from which directions can be set."

In that one paragraph, apart from SACREs, nine organisations are mentioned as being significant. Of those nine only two, the TDA and the REC, survived the seventeen months between one REC report being delivered and work beginning on a new one. QIA and CEL have been amalgamated and relaunched as the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), NEAFE and FIFEF have merged and become the National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education (fbfe), QCA has been divided into QDCA and Ofqual (even though the legislation to achieve this has yet to be passed, see below), and DfES is now the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will soon be no more. Another very significant player in the FE field over the last couple of years was not mentioned in the previous report because it did not yet exist at the time of writing, and will be mentioned just once again in this report as it no longer exists, this being the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), now absorbed within the new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Some of these amalgamations may not be of great significance but others certainly are, with changes in personnel sometimes meaning the loss of champions for FBVE in FE, and often the need for incoming personnel to come to terms with agenda on which FBVE is low priority if it features at all. And when the earlier report was written local authorities had next to nothing to do with FE colleges whereas millions of pounds annually will shortly be funneled to FE colleges via local authorities, who now have responsibility for students aged 16 to 18. With this may come a degree of influence. This last development being but one of the expected outcomes of "The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill" currently working its way through Parliament. The main areas in which this bill is likely to impinge on FE is through its:

1. Dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council
2. Transfer of the responsibility for funding education and training for 16-18-year-olds to local authorities
3. Creation of
 - 3.1. the Young Person's Learning Agency
 - 3.2. the Skills Funding Agency
 - 3.3. a new regulatory body for qualifications (Ofqual), and a new agency (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency - QCDA) to carry out the non-regulatory functions currently performed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

An organisation which is not mentioned in the previous report has been in existence since 1996 and may be one that the REC should seek to cultivate a relationship with. This is the Association of Colleges (AoC), an organisation set up by the English FE colleges themselves to support them in their work (there are sister organisations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). It publishes an annual "College Key Facts" document from which we learn that as of summer 2009:

"737,000 16 to 18-year-olds choose to study in Colleges (compared with 487,000 in all schools) ... 82,000 14 to 16-year-olds are enrolled at a College."¹

¹ A poll recently conducted on the AoC website was asking the question "Should colleges be allowed to teach 14 year olds full time?" This may well point to a new development with considerable significance for the future of RE.

Seeking, at the beginning of this project to establish some elementary factual information I tried telephoning and emailing both the AoC and LSIS. At AoC no one could be found who could answer questions concerning FBVE in FE colleges. At LSIS I got some helpful, but very general information about the governance and finance arrangements for FE colleges but further questions brought the reply,

“I’m afraid that I do not have the resources to answer your query as it is rather extensive and appears to require some research which may be more valuable for you to carry out”

and when I then asked if there was a list of email addresses whereby general curriculum queries could be sent to each of the English FE colleges I was informed,

“Due to data protection I cannot share any contact details with you.”

An effort to get at information about the entries and results for RE / RS examinations of FE Colleges from the examination boards produced no good result as the examination boards do not code their information about examination centres in a way that allows them easily to extract or make available the information I was seeking. An enquiry to the DCSF resulted in my being told that it collated no relevant information about FE colleges and suggested that I enquire of DIUS. It proved impossible to locate anyone at DIUS to deal with my question.

This all led to a preliminary conclusion that the FE sector is going through a period of significant change and uncertainty as regards matters of curriculum, governance and financing, and issues of FBVE are not widely seen as central either to the present or any likely future for the sector.

Some people involved in trying to promote FBVE in FE maintain that it would be wrong to be overly pessimistic about the situation as the difficulties are balanced by more positive developments. Here they cite things like the religious aspects of colleges’ statutory duties to promote citizenship and community cohesion, the inclusion of ‘religion or belief’ alongside other areas of potential discrimination in the Equality Bill currently before Parliament, and the progress that is being made on producing non-statutory guidance on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for use within FE. Unfortunately, it is not easy to discover what legislation is being referred to in claiming that colleges have a duty to promote citizenship and community cohesion¹. Protection from discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the new Equality Bill appears to be nothing new, there is a similar provision in the Equality Act 2006. As to non-statutory guidance on promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within FE, there is little reason to believe that it will have any great effect in colleges, and it remains to be seen if it can avoid the problems that have beset SMSC in schools (see appendices 9 and 10 to this report.)

¹ LSIS guidance on post-16 citizenship teaching refers to “a new duty on schools, and ***encouragement for colleges***, to promote community cohesion and explore shared values “ (italics and boldening added: ISBN 978-1-84572-723-9)

Selecting colleges to visit

In looking for six colleges to visit to gather information about FBVE it was immediately obvious that the sample size was too small for any emerging data to be statistically significant. Therefore nothing was to be gained from seeking a random sample of colleges. Colleagues at fbfe were eager to point me to places where there was good practice, and the contacts they provided proved invaluable. In the event five of the six colleges visited were recommended or offered by either the staff of fbfe (particularly Harjinder Singh) or by people met at meetings of fbfe. One visit, to the college of North West London, was selected partly because it is geographically local to where I live, and also because I have a personal contact with a senior member of staff there. It was also useful as it is representative of many colleges that do not have chaplaincy facilities nor own to any explicit interest in students' spiritual and moral development - the college's constitution proclaims it 'a secular college'.

It did seem important to visit colleges of different types, and colleges with a significant variation in demography. My intention to include both a college with a church affiliation and a VI form college was met by a single visit, to St Francis Xavier College in Wandsworth, London. A third London college visited was the college of North East London. Then I sought a Midlands college, a college in the North East and one in the South West. The three colleges that agreed to my visits were North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, Stockton Riverside College, and the College of North Devon (which had recently amalgamated with the College of East Devon although as yet there has been no change of name).

A telling experience

I initially hoped to make contact via telephone and email with a significant number of other colleges with thoughts of putting relevant questions to senior managers about either the provision their institutions make for students' pastoral, and particularly spiritual, care, or their reasons for not believing such provision to be appropriate. Here I did initially select a random sample of about 30 colleges (just under 10% of the FE colleges in England) and sent emails for the attention of a named individual at each institution who had student welfare as part of her brief. When replies were not forthcoming I tried following up the emails with telephone calls but generally either failed to make contact with the individual I wanted to speak with, or was told they were too busy, or that FBVE was not an area they covered. I then asked a friend working in the FE sector to make contact with colleagues in a number of colleges to try to find people willing to talk to me. This turned up a surprising degree of hostility to the idea of promoting FBVE from some people, many at very senior levels, within FE. Reasons for this hostility appeared to come down to one or more of the following:

- General hostility to religion
- A belief that religion is personal and private and therefore not the business of an educational institution
- Bad experience of chaplains within colleges which led to one description of their being, "a total pain and a liability"
- Fear that religion is potentially divisive and therefore expression or discussion of it could be dangerous - it was suggested that encouraging religious awareness would be contrary to good practice in promoting community cohesion.

It has to be said that fbfe has worked with more than one hundred and forty colleges in the last three years, and more than two hundred English FE colleges currently have some sort of chaplaincy arrangements. So clearly there are many colleges, or influential individuals within many colleges, who are supportive of chaplaincy work or of incorporating faith and belief awareness into their qualification, tutorial or enrichment programmes.

Setting up the visits

For the colleges I visited, initial contact with a member of staff of each institution came about through personal meeting, telephone, or email contact, sometimes following an introduction by a third party. However, having made contact I then sent each institution an email which, although personalised, in each case detailed:

1. The nature of the REC
2. The aims of the project

3. A brief personal CV
4. Clarification of my areas of interest which included:
 - 4.1.chaplaincy and pastoral arrangements
 - 4.2.curriculum areas where any aspect of FBVE would be found
 - 4.3.enrichment programmes¹
 - 4.4.tutorial arrangements including the selection and training of tutors
5. A promise that anything written that identified institutions or individuals would be cleared with those individuals prior to submission of the report.

Descriptions of the visits

In the appendices to this report I give a brief account of each of the six visits I made to colleges. In each case I explain why the particular college was chosen; give any information that seems relevant from recent Ofsted reports; and give results of a Google search of each college's website for key terms. Whilst there is nothing scientific about the Google search process, college websites tend to be extensive and have on them minutes of meetings, reports and policy documents, albeit that many of these documents are not available for inspection by unauthorised visitors to the website. It does not seem unreasonable to assume some correlation between how seriously an institution takes something and the number of times related terms appear on its website.

My description of each visit tries simply to capture the nature of discussions had and key points about the possibilities and difficulties of different approaches to matters of faith, beliefs and values in the context of further education.

¹ Enrichment refers to a programme of activities introduced into schools or colleges for students aged 14 - 19 for the purpose of contributing to the development of skills and personal growth beyond that offered by their main course of study.

Conclusions and recommendations from the study

Based mainly on my visits to the six colleges, but also on discussions with colleagues with experience of the FE sector, and on reading a selection of publications of major organisations working in areas of chaplaincy and faith, beliefs and values in further education, I have come to some conclusions and have some recommendations to make for future activity that the REC or some of its member organisations might wish to consider. Before detailing my own conclusions it is important to remind ourselves that the REC received recommendations concerning future action to promote FBVE in FE in the report it received from Lat Blaylock. Those recommendations are set out again in an appendix to this current document with some added comments by the author of this report.

Also in 2007, NEAFE and CEL published "Making space for faith: beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector: A report on the national enquiry into opportunities for spiritual and moral development in further education". This sixty page report made twenty eight recommendations to thirteen different institutions or groups of institutions.

Recommendations coming out of this present study

Before detailing recommendations it is important to emphasise the degree of change and uncertainty currently affecting the FE sector. It is of course easy to protest that change is constant throughout education and that moreover the fact of change makes it imperative that we act now to achieve our goals in relation to FE. However, whilst it would be wrong to counsel inactivity, it is appropriate to remember the extent of recent and expected changes within FE, and indeed the added uncertainty attendant on the current public finance situation or the plans for the sector a new government may bring. We should understand that we may find it particularly difficult to press our concerns on college principals and other senior managers at the present time.

Here then are my proposals:

1. The REC should consider whether to campaign for legislative changes for new statutory requirements on FE colleges in relation to religious education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

It appears incoherent for a government to have different policies with regard to a compulsory core of each student's educational experience depending only on the setting in which students choose to undertake their study. It is undoubtedly the case that one factor that leads headteachers with VI forms to drop RE and collective worship is that they know that these are not required in FE colleges and students can and do "vote with their feet"¹

However, to mount such a campaign is not without its risks. Any effort to impose either RE and / or spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in FE colleges is likely to be strongly resisted by many. Any such campaign would risk government ending up achieving coherence between the position across schools and FE colleges by abolishing or loosening the requirements on schools rather than imposing new requirements on colleges. College principals, when asked by a previous study how they would view statutory provision in this area were overwhelmingly negative.

At this very time an REC member body, fbfe, is working with LSIS to produce a non-statutory document of recommendations for work on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in an FE setting. Whilst one must wish the endeavour well, there must be a suspicion that much hard work and possibly a very worthy document will fail to impinge very much on practice within FE settings. However, the case for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in schools and colleges might be enhanced if a clear account of what is asked for, and why, particularly in relation to spiritual and moral, can be given. This is an activity the REC might be able to work on and I suggest a possible way forward in appendix 10 of this report.

¹ I remember a headteacher of a very successful secondary Catholic school making this very point to me when a denominational inspection drew attention to the effectively voluntary nature of VI form participation in RE and collective worship at his school.

2. The REC should locate individuals within key organisations willing to cooperate with the REC in its work with FE

This may just seem like a reworking of the recommendation for multi-agency partnerships from the 2007 report, and to some extent it is. However, the emphasis here is on identifying and getting to know key people in each of the relevant agencies and to introduce them to us and our work. So, for example, the fbfe is currently working with LSIS on its SMSC project, and has the Association of Colleges, Diploma Development Partnerships (DDPs), government departments, awarding bodies and other groups involved in this initiative. The REC should ensure that it benefits from the contacts established by fbfe. Further discussion with either the examination boards or with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills might result in access becoming available to annual data on religious studies examination entries and results from FE colleges. Most especially, the REC needs to ensure that FE matters are kept on its agenda and the representative of fbfe is invited to contribute regular updates to the REC Board and at Council meetings.

3. The REC, in collaboration with fbfe, should consider the possibility of mounting a campaign to increase awareness of the effectiveness of multifaith chaplaincy, and to offer support in the selection, appointment and management of chaplains

During the course of working on this project it became evident that whilst there are highly effective and highly respected chaplains working in FE colleges, there are also college principals and managers who have had bad experiences of chaplains. Non-attributable comments shared with me included such statements as:

“why bother they [chaplains are] a total pain and a liability”

“I would not touch it [chaplaincy] with a barge-pole”

“In terms of chaplaincy – I had always avoided this ... having got my fingers burnt ...!”

“I have inherited a vicar ... He is fairly harmless but does rather overplay his hand when pushing for the College to address the spiritual care agenda. He ticks lots of boxes in relation to addressing diversity.”

“Using a local vicar would be our preferred option, the C of England will help us do this. The person wears a dog collar and everyone knows where they stand ...The person would not be an employee and therefore terminating or addressing any problems may be easier.”

“Getting the remit and expectations ironed out at the beginning is crucial and then having a strong manager to oversee their work is a must. Never let them[chaplains] out alone!”

I have no way of knowing just how widespread such opinions are, and am not clear what exactly each comment is based on, however I have been led to believe that perceptions are that some chaplains:

- simply do not relate well to students in FE colleges
- can become too engrossed in committee work and be insufficiently available to students
- are sometimes, at best, insufficiently equipped to deal the the ‘all faiths and none’ environment of the average FE college or, at worse, are guilty of inappropriate efforts to proselytise

Whilst it would be naive not to recognise the existence of simple prejudice against the idea of chaplaincy on the part of some, it does seem to be the case that genuine problems have arisen. Perhaps many of the genuine problems FE managers have encountered with chaplains have arisen due to their own failure to recruit chaplains appropriately. Here might be an area where the REC or fbfe can help by realistically promoting the benefits of effective chaplaincy to college leaders and producing guidelines for appointing chaplains, perhaps including job description templates and recommendations as to interviewing - including involving students in the process.

Additionally, some college managers are not clear what it is that chaplains offer that is different to what is provided by counsellors. Having discussed this with both chaplains and student users of chaplaincy services it is evident to me that a huge difference is that people rarely get to see a counsellor without an appointment and do not make such an appointment without a clearly defined

problem they want help with. The good chaplain, 'lurking with intent'¹ in the common room or refectory is available for the casual conversation that often precedes the much more important interaction that only takes place when confidence has been won. Also, whilst counsellors and others with pastoral concern undoubtedly have many skills, they perhaps tend to think in terms of caseloads and quantifiable outcomes. It is the chaplain who can be the sometimes older, wiser, friend and conversation partner who often just listens but can on occasions be crucial in helping someone see a situation differently or in some other way moving on the thinking of a student or member of college staff, especially in times of grief or despair, or when facing an important life-decision.

In addition to their direct interpersonal work chaplains often run a chaplaincy centre, and chaplaincy activities, and these are, for many students, safe environments where friendships with like-minded peers can be developed, and purposeful and sometimes challenging activities undertaken.

A problem in any effort to sell chaplaincy to college leaders is the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of quantifying the benefits they offer². Here the support of someone like Paul Head of the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, a very successful college principal who is willing to vouch on the basis of experience for the effectiveness of a good chaplain, could prove extremely helpful. Paul's insistence on the part a chaplain plays in enhancing student welfare and thereby positively impacting on examination results is persuasive.

One finding from the visits to colleges was that the success of a chaplaincy, and FBVE input into tutorials and enrichment programmes, can be greatly enhanced by appropriate management. Again CONEL³ was an example of excellent practice where all aspects of student support were managed by Jan Dunster, who as Assistant Director (Learner Information and Support) had control of all areas of pastoral support. Physically locating chaplains' offices so that they have easy interaction with counsellors and nurses is also helpful, as at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College.

The German philosopher Gadamer told us that "The hopes and expectations of the younger generation are no longer directed toward the undetermined, the unmeasured, or the uncanny, but toward a functional, rational interpretation of the world."⁴ But elsewhere he insisted "the process of making oneself at home in the world has never ceased to take place, and has never ceased to be the better reality that is not deafened by the madness of technology."⁵ Colleges have hundreds of staff encouraging the former, surely they can afford one to help students with the latter!

4. The REC, in collaboration with fbfe, should consider whether it is appropriate to devise and issue advice to FE colleges about good practice in relation to tutorials

This suggestion comes out of information gathered from visits to colleges. First, at Stockton Riverside, Miriam Stanton explained how frustrating it was that because all tutor groups took their one hour a week of tutorial time at different times of the week, and sometimes at different times each week. In this situation it is impossible to put on anything resembling a school assembly with outside speakers or performers. The nearest thing that can be done is to set up events that happen over the lunch period, advertising them, and hoping a fair number of students turn up. I am not clear whether this practice of floating tutorial periods is widespread, or if there are any good reasons for it, but if colleges could agree that everyone, or even most groups, would have a tutorial period at the same time perhaps just once a month, then serious effort and some expense could go into very high quality presentations that might impinge meaningfully and beneficially on student consciousness.

¹ This description of her job was offered to me by a chaplain working in HE 20 years ago, but it seems appropriate to the way in which good chaplains seem to just be around with not much to do at exactly the right time.

² Sadly we live in a world that has too often ignored the dictum of Albert Einstein that "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

³ The College of North East London, which amalgamated with another college in August 2009 to become the College of Haringey Enfield and North East London

⁴ Heidegger's Ways, page 16

⁵ Heidegger's Ways, page 78

Also, in this connection, the situation described by Naomi Nixon at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, and by Mohamed Patel at North Devon, where they each have to sell themselves to individual tutors to get the opportunity to have direct input into student tutorial time seems inappropriate and likely to waste their talents and their time. One would have thought that tutorial time should be overseen by managers to ensure that all students have access to FBVE and that it is delivered by the most competent person available to do it - this suggests a greater degree of planning, and more advanced planning, than seems to be the case in some colleges.

5. The REC should consider whether it can bid for funds first to audit where issues of FBVE arise, or should arise, in the various courses offered to 16 - 19 students, and subsequently to work on material to support teaching in these areas

At the College of North West London students told me how well issues of religion and culture are dealt with in their Health and Social Care BTEC¹ course. However, a telephone conversation with someone at EdExcel suggested that the same course might be taught very differently, and rather less well in some other places. During a discussion at CONEL it emerged that there might be unmet needs for similar teaching within Sport and Leisure where religious constraints might explain why some people are reluctant to participate in certain activities², but people being trained to manage or work in sport and leisure may not be being systematically taught about this. It is likely that there are other qualifications where faith and belief issues are going unrecognised. Identifying where this is occurring and then offering suitable resources to deal with these issues in the classroom might well be seen very positively by those who teach the courses.

Work on this would need collaboration between people who teach these courses and people with good knowledge of different religious traditions. This might not be easy to set up and there would be expense. However, beginning work in these areas on a small scale would surely be worthwhile.

6. The REC should raise with government (it is not clear whether that should be the DCSF or the Department for Business Innovation & Skills) the question of how colleges can fund courses in religious education that do not lead to qualifications.

This problem was brought to my attention by Peter Ward, the Education Officer (Secondary), for the Diocese of Westminster and REC Board Member. In the past there have been constraints on colleges spending public money on qualifications that were not approved by the QCA, and the nature of FE funding made it difficult for colleges to find money for courses that do not lead to a qualification. The Catholic Education Service (CES) pressed for, and obtained flat rate funding for sixth form general RE at levels 1,2,3 provided it is an approved, assessed course. An appropriate course, approved by diocesan authorities, and validated by the National Open College Network (NOCN) is now followed in Roman Catholic schools and Sixth Form Colleges.

However, the funding arrangements for students aged 16 - 19 are changing as a result of the "Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill" now going through Parliament. The intention is to transfer responsibility for funding education and training for young people over compulsory school age but under 19 from the Learning and Skills Council to local education authorities. What the Bill requires LEAs to fund is a 'core entitlement' to a course of study in mathematics, English and information and communications technology, and an 'additional entitlement' to a course of study in a diploma entitlement area as specified by the Secretary of State - probably, in practice, any of the new

¹ BTEC stands for 'The Business And Technology Education Council' which was a body that ceased to exist in 1996 but the qualifications it pioneered continue to exist, administered now the the examining body Edexcel.

² For example a Sikh unwilling to remove her / his kara is simply unable to play rugby, and probably some other sports, because of non-negotiable health and safety requirements imposed by the sport's governing body. Muslims may be put off joining some sports clubs because of communal changing and showering facilities which contravene religious requirements: in this latter case if sports coaches and administrators were aware of the problem then some alternative provision could, and sometimes would, be made available. John Smith, the president of Dulwich Cricket Club, in a private conversation, raised the issue that whilst the club has been successful in attracting player members of African-Caribbean and Indian heritage, it has been less successful in attracting players from Pakistani or Bangladeshi origins. (Although when shown this report in draft he pointed out, "As we have recently had some players from Pakistan, you may wish to say 'as successful'.")

diplomas (and one presumes that BTEC, GCSE and A level qualifications are covered by their status as 'additional and specialist learning' within the diploma structure)¹. However, religious education gets no mention in the new bill, and it is hard to see how it will be possible for FE colleges to fund RE, other than examination courses, or, indeed, for non-VA VI form colleges to meet their current duty to provide agreed syllabus RE if students ask for it, under the proposed new legislation. This situation may have arisen simply as an oversight but it is something the REC and others need to raise and possibly campaign on quickly.

7 The REC needs to look closely at the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) currently in use in schools and due to be adopted as the 'personal and social development learning' required for all students involved in 'foundation learning.'²

At first sight the PLTS do not accommodate much that would normally be incorporated within common understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but closer scrutiny might reveal some scope for them to be developed in that direction. PLTS are now used universally in schools and their place as a compulsory aspect of Foundation Learning means that increasing numbers of students at FE colleges will be exposed to them.

"The [Personal Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)] framework comprises six groups of skills that, together with the functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT, are essential to success in learning, life and work. In essence, the framework captures the essential skills of: managing self; managing relationships with others; and managing own learning, performance and work. It is these skills that will enable young people to enter work and adult life as confident and capable individuals."

Quoted from downloadable document available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-3-and-4/skills/plts/index.aspx>

¹ 'Bill as amended in Committee, on 20.10.09' and 'explanatory notes' on the bill dated, 07.05.09 are the latest documents available on <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/apprenticeshipsskillschildrenandlearning.html> as of time of writing and are the documents from which information about the bill has been taken.

² Foundation Learning is the name given to courses for students aged 14 and over who are beginning the course at Entry level and level 1 in the NQF (more strictly this should be a reference to the QCF - the Qualifications and Credit Framework - but in practice these levels are the same in both frameworks).

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Visit to The College of North West London, 2nd Dec 2008

Purpose of visit:

This was my first ever encounter with an FE college so I wanted to get a general sense of how colleges in the sector, and the people working and studying in them, operate and their general approach to pastoral support for students.

People spoken with:

Receptionist

Grethe Woodward, Faculty Head Business and Computing; and head of 14 - 19

Obi Asika, Equality and Diversity Manager

Steve McCoy, Head of student liaison services

Dave Thompson, works with Steve, on duty in student room during my visit

5 students aged 16-19 including Sarah (no RE was taught in her school at key stage 4 but it was her favourite subject at key stage 3) - I was left alone in the students' room (common room) during a lunch period with something like 50 to 60 students eating sandwiches, playing computer games or just chatting, but I spent almost all of my time sitting with 5 students doing a 'Health and Social Care' BTEC as preparation for HE and a career in a related field (nursing or social work). The subject of 'diversity', including a substantial amount about religion, is a core unit of the course.

Vicki Fagg, *The Principal.*, and I met separately two days later for discussion about the visit and related matters, and I have maintained sporadic communication with Vicki throughout the period of this project.

Pre-Visit

Email exchanges with Vicki, Grethe and Obi established the purposes of my visit and agreed arrangements and parameters. I was apprised of the fact that the college, as a matter of policy, has designated itself "a secular college."

Prior to the visit I read the college's latest Ofsted report. It was last inspected from 29 Jan to 2 Feb 2007. Ofsted rated the College good in all categories but certain aspects were picked out for praise and the judgement of 'outstanding'.

"Overall, the college provides an outstanding response to the needs of learners, employers and the local community"

"The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Many learners have been successfully recruited from disadvantaged and non-traditional learner groups. The college has very good links with black and minority ethnic groups from business and the local community, including a very successful partnership with a local Islamic college."

"The college's record on social and educational inclusion is outstanding. Much emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of the community ... The diversity of the learners and staff at the college is celebrated, and the college provides a safe and harmonious atmosphere in which to learn."

Also before the visit I explored the college's website where, by chance, the home page displayed information about a recent celebration of Diwali at which students and staff of all faith backgrounds were welcome and many clearly attended. A search of the whole website (using Google's advance search facilities) revealed:

Six results from www.cnwl.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR values, OR morals, OR ethics, OR spiritual.

One result from www.cnwl.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR morals, OR spiritual.¹

The search for chaplain, OR chaplains, OR chaplaincy from site:www.cnwl.ac.uk/ - did not match any documents.

The visit

The three sites each has prayer facilities in dedicated rooms that were called prayer rooms but have been re-named 'multi-faith' rooms to emphasise that they can be used by adherents of all religions (Muslims make considerable daily use of these rooms, Christian groups regularly use them). More impressively, some building work has been carried out to make washrooms suitable for wudhu, and cleaners have been given extra time to ensure these washrooms are always in a reasonable state.

There are impressive tutorial and student support procedures which students confirmed actually work and do not just exist on paper. Someone from LSIS was coming in the following week to organise citizenship training for all tutors so that the subject's position in the tutorial programme could be enhanced. An extensive enrichment programme includes women-only sport and exercise opportunities which are widely taken up, and Muslim women are prominent in their involvement in cultural and social trips and college voluntary activities (including non-Muslim cultural celebrations).

I was assured that the personal tutors have, between them, very strong links with local religious communities which have successfully been consulted e.g. to clarify the need for Muslim male students to attend Friday midday prayers, and to sort out issues around residential trips. A number of special events bring together people from a wide variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds.

There is plenty of evidence on notice boards around college that equality and diversity issues are taken very seriously and the college is pro-active in promoting these. Also I was directed to the college's formal definition of 'secular' from a policy document, which suggests an intention to respect, and accommodate where possible, students' religious commitments:

"A Secular College

CNWL respects the diverse cultural and religious traditions of all its students and accepts the rights of individuals and groups peaceably to worship and to fulfill their cultural obligations. Accordingly, the College will neither promote, nor permit to be promoted, any one religious faith or culture. Whilst College facilities exist primarily for the delivery of educational activities, arrangements will be made, where practicable, for students to carry out essential religious observance. Dedicated facilities cannot be provided for particular faith groups."

Obviously there is always more that might be done, but I found lots of evidence of an active determination to respect and accommodate difference of all sorts, and considerable success in practically so-doing.

In discussion with one member of staff I raised the issue of whether a multi-faith chaplain could add anything to what is already on offer and got the reply, "I don't think so," but then, "and who do you think we should make redundant to fund the post?" This was a theme I encountered in all subsequent college visits, FE Colleges are the 'poor relations' in the world of education, money is tight and anything that cannot be justified in terms of a particular funding stream is difficult to justify at all.

Discussion with the Principal

I suggested to the Principal that it is hard to believe that a college with 14,000 students does not have enough coming and going of staff to be able to find a way to fund a chaplain and she explained to me the college's single biggest issue, it is funded at around a 10% lower level than inner-London colleges but has all the same costs (Brent shares a border with Westminster so it is hard to understand why it is not regarded as inner-London when all other Westminster neighbouring boroughs are).

More broadly, I understand the Principal's position to be that she has no hostility to the idea of multi-faith chaplains for colleges that find them appropriate. The overwhelming majority of her students are local and some of them, and some of her staff, are actively involved with local churches and mosques

¹ The reason for repeating a search first including and then excluding the words "values" and "ethics" is that these words most often come up in searches of college websites in relation to College's or departmental 'statements of values' or in references to codes of 'professional ethics'.

(the college does not keep records of religious affiliation but looks to be predominantly Muslim with African-Caribbean and African Christians being significant minority religious communities.) She believes that her students and staff who feel the need for spiritual guidance and support will look first to their home religious communities and secondly, in many cases, to members of staff who share their religious convictions. The college makes exceptionally good provision for students to voice their opinions (it pays for a student union facilitator) via a multiplicity of feedback channels and if spiritual / religious issues were raised by students that would be taken seriously, but they are not.

Appendix 2 - Visit to Stockton Riverside FE College, 22nd April 2009

Purpose of visit:

I had been told that Stockton Riverside College had made the decision to set up a Chaplaincy facility for students and was in the process of doing this. A visit to this college would allow me to ask about what had led to the decision and what processes and obstacles intervened between the making of the decision and implementing it.

People spoken with:

Miriam Stanton, deputy principal of Stockton Riverside College and formerly the principal of Bede Sixth Form College which merged with SRC last year

Karen Sutcliffe, Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator;

Sue Pattison, Director of Progression & Equality, Sue could not attend the meetings because of pressure of other work but explained her involvement;

Andrew Howard, Anglican Chaplain to the University of Teesside and Associate Priest at St John the Evangelist and St Columba with St Paul;

Paul Salter, Co-ordinating Chaplain/RC Chaplain, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust.

Pre-Visit

Email exchanges with Miriam Stanton established the purposes of my visit and agreed arrangements and parameters. Miriam had informed me before I arrived that

“We are currently looking at the possibility of setting up a chaplaincy (but struggling). What has been very successful is the Respect Day at SRC and the work with the northern regional Interfaith Forum chaired by Roger Lowans”.

Miriam said she had

“recently visited Cambridge Regional College which has a vibrant chaplaincy. South Tyneside College is in the process of launching its chaplaincy service as is Darlington College. Our regional contact [with fbfe] is Gurdev Singh”

Prior to the visit I read the college’s latest Ofsted reports. The last full report had been undertaken 8th to 12th May 2006. This report states that “The college delivers courses at many other centres and outreach sites”. As I came to learn this is quite typical of large FE colleges and coupled with much use of temporary and part-time staff raises particular issues for pastoral care and the delivery of FBVE.

Ofsted gave Stockton Riverside the highest grade, outstanding, for its leadership and management and, unsurprisingly therefore, for its capacity to improve. Other areas inspected were all judged to be good. Inspectors found the college’s,

“approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding.”

“Learners benefit from good guidance and a broad range of welfare and support services ...The governors, the principal and senior managers promote a strong culture of equality and improvement.”

It is hard to know whether the statement in this Ofsted report that, “Teachers in health and social care effectively address equality and diversity” should raise the concern that these issues are not addressed elsewhere or whether it is simply a case of inspectors reporting on what they encountered and no further implication is to be drawn.

A search of the college website (using Google’s advance search facilities) revealed:

About 23 results from www.stockton.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR values, OR morals, OR ethics, OR spiritual.

8 results from www.stockton.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR morals, OR spiritual.

1 result from www.stockton.ac.uk for chaplain, OR chaplains, OR chaplaincy.

The website entry concerning chaplaincy was quite interesting. In the minutes of a governors' meeting of 14 Dec 2006 the principal had spoken of an expectation that new legislation would give FE colleges "responsibility for the spiritual well being of students aged 16 to 19." He had further reported that. "The college was already active in this respect" citing involvement in the "Faith in FE forum.". One wonders whether the fact that in 2009 the college had not made much progress in setting-up chaplaincy facilities related to the decreased likelihood of government now including any statutory duty to promote spiritual welfare in forthcoming legislation.

The Visit

Introductory

The particular day for the visit had been chosen because Miriam, Sue and Karen had a prearranged meeting with two local chaplains who had been invited to come and advise on the setting up of multifaith chaplaincy at SRC. In the event Sue could not participate because of pressure of other work, although she took the time to meet me.

Meeting 1, with Miriam and Karen

Miriam explained that she was long-time principal of a successful VI form college, Bede College, which had within the last year amalgamated with SRC. Her role as a deputy-principal of SRC is to continue to head the Bede College operation but also to take on a range of other responsibilities which includes leading on work to develop a multifaith chaplaincy linking to equality and diversity work.

Karen as co-ordinator for the work in equality and diversity has organised many successful college wide functions and contributed to policy-making and the setting up of support structures for groups such as the disabled, and for gay, lesbian bi- and trans-sexual students. Karen is keen to extend facilities to incorporate spiritual care and recognises her need for support in that area, particularly in relation to chaplaincy work. She has organised trips for students to promote faith, beliefs and values work of which one to a fairly local Ahmaddiya mosque was memorably successful.

Two previous attempts to make progress in setting up chaplaincy arrangements for students at the college had been of limited help. An initial invitation to potential partners and interested parties had produced very little response. A second meeting was organised as a project by business students who became interested. This was more successful and generated offers of limited support from a Muslim, a Humanist and a Quaker. Although not present at that meeting a local Muslim Councillor, who is also active within a local mosque, has offered support. This afternoon's meeting is with two local chaplains who had diary clashes with the previous meeting.

Miriam and Karen expressed some frustration at the combination of much apparent encouragement from government and other agencies for multi-faith chaplaincy work but no money to fund it. Currently the entire annual budget for equality and diversity work is £2,000 (in a college with around 12,000 students - full-time equivalent figure) and any attempt to increase that would mean taking money away from other areas of college work at a time when financial difficulties are particularly prominent and unlikely to improve in the current financial climate.

A concern was the lack of clarity about the distinctive aims and hoped for outcomes of a number of initiatives that are often bundled together, these being: equality and diversity work; the community cohesion and preventing violent extremism agendas (the latter being seen as potentially in conflict with the former); pastoral support generally; and chaplaincy work. There seems to be a general assumption that these all fit comfortably together but whilst some overlaps are obvious there appear to be different and sometimes conflicting priorities.

Karen wondered whether the word 'chaplain' might be inappropriate as it has Christian overtones which might be off-putting in a predominantly secular environment. Miriam said that a question about religious affiliation had been introduced to the Bede College application form in the last year and was planned to be incorporated in the SRC application form. At Bede last year, of 200 applicants about 25 identified themselves as having an affiliation with a religious tradition, mostly Christian - the proportion at SRC may be somewhat different as it draws more students from central Stockton where there is a significant Muslim population. There is a general acceptance that people with non-Christian

religious affiliations are unlikely to make up more than 4 to 6 per cent of the college population, which is what would be expected from the 2001 census.

Miriam and Karen have been assiduous in gathering information about chaplaincy in FE. They have read all recent documentation and had helpful advice from Gurdev Singh, fbfe's regional officer, who visited the college with Harjinder Singh. Miriam had visited Cambridge Regional College, an acknowledged leader in the field of chaplaincy work in the FE sector. Karen had been to a course in York at which Karenza Passmore had made a significant contribution. There had also been a visit to Durham University that was pioneering a model that sought to bring together issues of Faith, Art, Culture and Environment (FACE) through a series of events that always bring at least two of those four strands together.

Having come quite recently to wider FE work Miriam had picked up the particular challenges as compared to her work in a VI Form college. At Bede she is able to organise assemblies at which everyone will be present. Tutor time is the same for all students. At SRC, whilst each group has an hour's tutorial time a week, this is fitted into its other work at the discretion of the tutor, so it is impossible, for example, to invite in a speaker or external group at a particular time in the knowledge that large numbers of students will be free to attend, let alone required to attend.

Both Miriam and Karen spoke about the wider problem of ensuring all staff are 'on board' with regard to diversity and equality matters in an institution that has, in total, twelve learning venues, some quite far-flung, and many part-time lecturers some of whom might be employed by a supply agency and work only in the evenings. Similarly, providing pastoral support for part-time students, especially those only attending during evenings presents problems. However, a college policy was now requiring all senior managers to attend a ten week, three hours a week, level 4 course on equality and diversity accredited by Teesside University. A ten week level 1 course for support staff is being planned.

Meeting 2, Andrew, Karen, Miriam, and Paul

Miriam opened the meeting by saying that SRC is wholly committed to the principle of multi-faith chaplaincy but it is something that will need to be done on a 'shoestring'. She asked the two chaplains present to outline the nature of the work they did and offer any advice they had for the college.

Paul suggested that Andrew's experience was most immediately relevant as his own hospital experience has aspects that are very different from work in a college.

Andrew explained that he was not wholly full-time as a university chaplain at Teesside, being associate priest at two nearby parishes. However, Teesside is very much a regional university with eighty-five to ninety per cent of students living at home and therefore his services as chaplain were not in demand in the evenings and at the weekends to the extent that they might be in a university that draws more students from a wider catchment area.

Andrew is not an employee of the university in that he continues to receive a stipend from the Diocese which then recovers a contribution to cover the chaplaincy element of his work from the university. Paul, on the other hand, is employed by the NHS. All NHS chaplains have to be approved by the religious organisation they represent. In the case of hospital chaplaincy the multi-faith nature of chaplaincy work is provided for by having a range of chaplains who can be called upon to meet specific religious needs of individual patients. However, Paul emphasised that very often patients need someone they can talk to about issues touching on the spiritual irrespective of denominational affiliation and said that much of the work he did is with people of all faiths and none. Andrew agreed, saying that whilst as an Anglican he has set up daily prayer services for Christians at the University, the bulk of his work involves dealing with students in situations where religious affiliation is not an issue, although he too has organised contacts with people from a range of religious traditions who can be called on more or less formally to help with situations where specific denominational allegiance is an issue.

The Middlesbrough Council of Faiths was identified as a vibrant and well-organised body that could be consulted if contacts are to be sought with a range of religious bodies. Miriam and Karen are already in touch with this organisation but it is reluctant to become too involved in work in the area

of a different local authority, although it had offered to help while efforts are being made to set up a similar organisation within Stockton. This raised another issue concerning the way in which ecclesiastical arrangements can be slightly problematic. Andrew, in crossing the bridge from Stockton to Thornaby had moved between different Anglican dioceses and should probably have sought permission to be attending this meeting. There was a similar issue with the Roman Catholics in that it was likely that the main college was in a different arch-diocese to the nearby hospital where Paul worked and the sixth form would be in a different Diocese from the main college site. Given the very close proximity of a large satellite Durham University campus, finding out what chaplaincy arrangements were on offer there and seeing if there was scope for cooperation was another possibility. Andrew and Paul each supplied contact details for the appropriate people within their Churches for the college to use for more formal contact.

Andrew made the point that much more of his chaplaincy work than he could ever have imagined is conducted via 'phone calls, text messages, emails, blogs and web-sites such as Facebook. Whilst physical presence and the offer of face to face contact remains absolutely essential, as a result of having indicated his willingness to be contacted at any time and publicised his mobile 'phone number, many students make their initial contact through text message, and much follow-up work to one-to-one meetings is conducted remotely. He saw it as vital to all chaplaincy work that the agenda of that work is set by those being ministered to, and that includes the mode of communication. The use of student focus groups to impact on the job description of a chaplain and to guide a chaplain in his day to day work is very valuable.

The issue was raised of ensuring that an appointed chaplain is suitable for the job, i.e. not seeing the role as an opportunity to proselytise and having good skills at interacting with young people. Both chaplains agreed that much relied on the college getting the job description and person specification right, and ensuring that if some sort of arrangement was sought with diocesan authorities it was made clear that the final decision on who could exercise the role of chaplain in the college remained with the college.

The possibility of circumventing some of the financial difficulty of funding a chaplaincy role by appointing someone suitable to a part-time teaching position was discussed. Here both chaplains felt that their separation from college / hospital management structures avoided any conflict of loyalties especially when asked for pastoral support by staff in dispute with college authorities. However, both enjoyed and found valuable the opportunities that were offered to contribute either to academic courses (Andrew) or in-service training (Paul) within the institutions where they worked.

Karen raised the question of the distinction between the work of a chaplain and a counsellor. It was generally agreed that there is overlap and that it is vital that each saw the other as a colleague with distinctive strengths, and had a willingness either to refer students / staff member to the colleague or, with the agreement of the student / staff member, to work in tandem. Andrew said that his placement within the student services college structure was helpful and facilitated him being at the right meetings and having easy contact with appropriate colleagues - although he also valued the dedicated Chaplaincy premises he has use of.

In leaving, both chaplains indicated their willingness to be contacted again and to offer more help if it was wanted.

After the chaplains had left Karen mentioned a structural difficulty for the college. Whereas the university had a students' services division where the chaplaincy found a natural home, at SRC the corresponding services were not managed in the same, unified way. Miriam said that this might be something that needs to be looked at.

Reflections on the day

1. Having previously encountered, on the one hand, college principals who have chaplaincy arrangements in place which they value highly, and, on the other hand, college principals who consider chaplaincy unnecessary and possibly counter-productive, it was instructive to find a situation where there seems to be a real commitment from the Principal down to the setting up of a chaplaincy, but where it is proving difficult for mainly financial but also structural reasons.

2. Having identified two areas of potential REC interest in the work of FE colleges, i.e. FBVE-sensitive pastoral support, and explicit teaching of FBVE issues within relevant curriculum areas, it has now become apparent that there is an area of possible overlap in the role of tutors, particularly for those working on BTEC courses. Here the person leading the course will often also be the 'tutor' with a defined pastoral role and responsibility for planning and delivering a 'tutorial' programme that will have to include topics like citizenship and community cohesion, and which could be extended to include FBVE. Here there may well be both training and resource needs. These tutors may need help in identifying and dealing with the FBVE issues that arise in relation to their subject areas, e.g. Hair and Beauty, Health and Social Care, Catering, but also need help in making links between FBVE work in the subject and the wider tutorial work. Before pursuing this I need to find out how common it is for tutors on such courses to have this dual role and the expectation that they will set aside an hour or so each week for tutorial work and activities.
3. In an email exchange with Miriam Stanton some time after my visit, she wrote,

"I think that ultimately the only way to get faiths values and beliefs into colleges is to find a way of getting relevant units of study into mainstream programmes so that students are required to do one unit within their course. This should be easy in theory as I cannot imagine a situation where anybody in hair and beauty, or construction, or business, or media is not going to encounter a multifaith society and need to understand different faiths and beliefs. It should be a core unit for all courses post 16 and if the government or BIS wished to specify this the exam boards would have to comply. Easy in theory, probably impossible in practice."

Activities to promote faith, beliefs and values education at Stockton Riverside College

The list on the following page was offered by Miriam Stanton, the deputy-principal of the college to indicate the extent of the efforts made by them over the last year. The reference to 'two colleges' refers to Stockton Riverside and Bede VI form college which have recently amalgamated although Bede continues to be run as a VI form college based on its own site.

Working together as two colleges on issues of faith in further education

Following merger:

1. Brought together the two tutorial calendars so that whatever events or celebration are taking place we can be aware of the need to respond across both sites
2. Joint visits to the Ahmadiyya mosque in Hartlepool where Mr Bilal Atkinson gave a very successful presentation to the students about the basis of Islam, stressing the difference between the core beliefs and the cultural amendments.
3. Visit by Harjinder Singh and Gurdev Singh to Stockton Riverside College and presentation to the Corporation. Visits to the Ahmadiyya mosque and the Gurdwara in Thornaby
4. Representation on the regional Interfaith in FE Steering Group by Miriam Stanton and Karen Sutcliffe.
5. Meeting arranged for local faiths and beliefs groups to discuss ways of incorporating faiths and beliefs into FE and the possibility of a chaplaincy.
6. Follow on meeting arranged by students – better turnout
7. Visit by John Breadon Churches' National Adviser in FE
8. Visit arranged by Gurdev Singh to Cambridge Regional College to model good practice in chaplaincy. Miriam Stanton attended. Colleagues from South Tyneside College also took part in the visit
9. Bede asked all new students to identify faith or belief when they enrolled in Sept 2008. It is hoped that this will be possible across SRC in Sept 2009
10. Miriam Stanton attended a seminar run by Govt Office North East on Community cohesion and prevention of violent extremism. Arthur Larry also attended a seminar on a similar topic specifically aimed at those with responsibility for students with learning difficulties and disabilities who may be targeted by extremists.
11. Currently seeking to involve students in research and writing about different faiths and exploring the concept of chaplaincy.
12. Setting up a quiet room in the new college and seeking advice from chaplains
13. Seeking ways of demonstrating multi cultural dimension of SRC in the entrance of the main college site
14. Karen and Sue starting to plan RESPECT fair for 2009

Appendix 3 - Visit to St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College (SFX), May 12th 2009

People spoken with:

Paul Sherlock, Assistant Principal - Core Curriculum, and Head of Religious Education

Claire Collieran, part-time Chaplain

Pre-Visit

It seemed important that the visits to FE colleges should include one to a sixth form college where there was good work going on in the area of chaplaincy or work in FBVE (other than successful A'level work, of which there are several examples). Finding such a college proved difficult. I turned to fbfe and was led by Jennifer Roberts and Harjinder Singh to look at St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College, a voluntary aided Roman Catholic institution in Wandsworth. After initial email contact with Paul Sherlock a date was fixed but then had to be changed because of an Ofsted inspection at the college.

Prior to the visit I read the college's April 2005 inspection report. This report was very positive about most areas of the college's work and made some specific comments about both RE and the Chaplaincy (although finding an HMI commenting about RE and observing RE lessons in a VA institution is somewhat surprising!)

"The chaplaincy has a well-publicised counselling service and contacts with external agencies to provide wider support for students ... The chaplaincy is at the heart of the college and is well used by students. Two full-time college chaplains promote the college's spiritual wellbeing through wide ranging activities including work with small groups of students on issues of social and spiritual significance in theme weeks. Large numbers of students are involved in such activities and charitable initiatives throughout the year. These include, for example, support for the Columbian Fathers in Peru and for Fairtrade, as well as for voluntary work by the Youth St Vincent de Paul group in a nursing home and in the Salvation Army charity shop. The chaplains provide an extensive framework for worship and the prayer life of the college. In addition to weekly Mass and morning prayers in the chapel, which are voluntary, there is a daily prayer session in tutorial groups and regular opportunities to celebrate the liturgical events of the year and key points in the academic calendar. Voluntary masses and liturgies on feast days and special occasions, such as the Academic Mass and the Leavers' Mass, are well attended. Students provide music and reading of a high quality. This approach ensures the pattern of the prayer life in the college is appropriate and meets the varied needs of the diverse student body."

"The general religious education programme encourages students to participate in discussions on belief, ethics, relationships and justice, science and religion and a variety of faith traditions in the light of Christian teaching. All students are engaged in the programme for one period each week as part of their entitlement and lessons are well attended. The programme is accredited as part of the Archdiocese of Southwark's Bishops Certificate for Core Studies. In 2004, 90% of students obtained the qualification. A team of seven well-qualified and experienced teachers teach the programme. All religious education lessons observed were good or better."

The reference to the 'Archdiocese of Southwark's Bishops Certificate for Core Studies' seemed odd and all efforts to locate such a qualification drew a blank. However, having since checked with Paul Sherlock at SFX it turns out that the title of the course was, 'The Archbishop of Southwark's Certificate for General Religion' which is a course approved by the National Advisory Board of Studies (NABS), a group formed from the religious education advisers of each RC diocese.

After my visit to the SFX I took the opportunity to read the report for the inspection of May of this year (2009). In this report there is nothing about the chaplaincy and just one comment about religious education:

"A well developed and popular religious education programme at level 1 is followed by all students."

The inspectors also comment:

"Students' horizons are broadened by a good range of interesting and challenging enrichment activities, including spiritual development, sports and the arts."

It is to be noted that this most recent inspection awarded SFX the grade of 'outstanding' for each of the four areas of the common inspection framework.

Perhaps most interestingly, from the inspection report, is what is said about the school's population:

"Over half of the students are baptised Catholics and there is a small minority of Muslim students. About three quarters of the students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, half of whom identify themselves as Black African or Black Caribbean. This is a much higher proportion than that present in the local boroughs. ... Around 60% of the students at the college come from disadvantaged backgrounds and over 830 are in receipt of education maintenance grants."

Prior to my visit I had mentioned that I would be going to SFX to Peter Ward, the Education Officer (Secondary), for the Diocese of Westminster. He explained that a difficult issue for SFX (and indeed for all Catholic colleges and any other VI form colleges that want to provide core religious education) has been a degree of confusion about requirements for courses in VI form colleges to lead to approved qualifications and about how such courses are to be funded. Whilst the Catholic Education Service (CES) and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA) established the right to deliver general RE courses in VA colleges it is not clear at the moment whether that might be threatened by new legislation on funding for 16 - 19 year olds currently before Parliament. What does seem clear is that what is required of school VI forms generally, RE courses as part of the basic curriculum, may be actually prohibited in non-VA VI form colleges if an agreed syllabus cannot be taught via an accredited course. Even where an accredited course is available there would be a financial disincentive to colleges from entering students for it. This is an anomaly that the REC may wish to bring to the attention of the DCSF.

The Visit

On arrival at the college, and after meeting Paul Sherlock, I was taken on a brief tour of the college. Most impressive was the Learning Resources Centre, a very attractive and well equipped facility with a library of over twenty-eight thousand books. The Centre subscribes to daily newspapers, and to over ninety journals and magazines. It offers extensive IT facilities. I had the opportunity to speak to the head of the centre who described the willingness of library staff to help students in their studies at a level significantly greater than that offered by many school librarians.

In passing I noticed an extraordinarily well equipped gymnasium, better than many commercial fitness centres in terms of the quality and range of equipment.

The chaplaincy base is also impressive, an attractive and welcoming space well-described on the college website thus:

"It's the one space in the college where you can sit down and feel accepted, people will chat to you even if you've not met them before." Year 13 student

The Chaplaincy Base is a welcome space open to every member of the college community whether you're a believer or not. It's a place to relax, to meet old and new friends, play a board game, discuss the meaning of life, or just have some time on your own and read the paper.

The door is open (well sometimes its shut, but just to stop the draughts!) from 10.30 am – 3.45 pm most days. Call in; it's your space, with only one requirement:

That all people feel accepted, valued, and respected."

After my tour I was taken to one of the RE teaching rooms where I was able to talk to Paul. I owned up to a bit of a prejudice against VI form colleges from the perspective of a former secondary school teacher who liked working in schools with VI forms and thought them generally good for teachers. Paul was very clear that whatever the preferences of teachers, VI form colleges are better for students, giving them, generally, a much wider choice of courses taught by well qualified teachers who develop significant specialist expertise both in the syllabuses they teach and the particular approaches to teaching that work with VI formers. I was assured that the claim of VI form colleges to be the best option for VI form students was supported statistically, something that has since been confirmed and publicised by research published by the Association of Colleges.

Paul explained the history of SFX, whereby a number of Roman Catholic schools in the Wandsworth, Southwark and Lambeth boroughs had voluntarily given up their own VI forms to create the

institution on the basis that their students would have preferential access. The college has been highly successful, and maintains close relationships with its partner schools. I had noticed both from the website, and a college magazine I had been reading in the reception area, that the college makes a point, whenever referring to a student, of naming her or his previous school.

In terms of religious education at SFX, there are popular and successful A-Level and A/AS-Level Religious Studies courses and the Chaplains take responsibility for contributions to the enrichment programme that look, for example, at questions of justice. But central to RE at SFX is the course for all students that is taken for one lesson a week as part of the core curriculum. Here I had a concern that religious, and perhaps specifically catholic, presuppositions might be made that ran counter to the beliefs of some students, but Paul reassured me that the approach is always one of dialogue and respect for all points of view. Also, the syllabus takes into consideration religious traditions other than Christianity. I raised the point that there is no mention of students' right (or their parents right for those under 18) to withdraw from religious education, but then had to concede that I did not know whether the legislation that made this available to students and parents in the school context applied to a VA VI form college. In any case Paul assured me that students generally enjoyed the RE course.

At this point we were joined by Claire Colleran, a part-time lay chaplain at SFX. The chaplaincy team at the college is made up of one full-time and two part-time lay chaplains. There is also a priest chaplain whose role seems to be to come into college for the purpose of celebrating mass. A qualified counsellor is available to students who need the sort of help that she can offer. Claire spoke about the sorts of issues she encounters and gave examples that seemed typical of those I had heard about in other colleges, housing and family difficulties being prominent. I asked about the extent to which non-believing students at the college made use of the chaplaincy and she replied that they did and she certainly did not see it as part of her role to press religion in situations where it was not appropriate. She spoke also of the student retreats to Kintbury (a retreat centre in Berkshire) which are a very important part of the SFX experience of many students, particularly those who become involved with the chaplaincy.

This visit was extremely useful to me in that it made me aware of what a good VI form college can offer. It also answered the question of whether VI form students can be persuaded to attend an institution that requires them to participate in a substantial core curriculum that may appear to them to have no direct and obvious relevance to their future career plans. However, without the opportunity to talk to students it is hard to judge whether they put up with the core curriculum because of the facilities the college offers them, and excellent results it achieves, or genuinely appreciate the core curriculum and would opt to keep it if given the choice.

It is obviously the case that those concerned with education in faith based educational institutions believe that religious education and spiritual and moral development is an essential aspect of education, and its provision is central to their mission.

Appendix 4 - Visit to North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, May 19th 2009

People spoken with:

Marion Plant, the Principal - I found myself sitting next to Marion at an fbfe Council Meeting on January 20th 2009 and out of our conversation came an invitation to visit her college and see the work being done by the chaplain there.

Rev Naomi Nixon, Chaplain

Sam Thompson - Chaplain's assistant

Cheryl Keen, Development Coordinator, Foundational Learning and Support

A group of eight 16 to 19 students during a tutorial session

Safiyah Patel -chaplaincy student on placement from Markfield Institute of Higher Education

Pre-Visit

Having agreed with the college principal that a visit could take place I received an email from the chaplain, the Rev. Naomi Nixon, who clearly had little idea who I was or why I was coming but who said I would be welcome and it would be important to time my visit so that I could see her "in action.". Having explained my interest, arrangements were made for the visit to go ahead at a time when Rev Nixon would be with a "group" although I arrived having no idea what sort of group she would be with and what she would be doing with them.

Prior to the visit I read the college's latest Ofsted report based on a visit undertaken by inspectors Oct 29 to Nov 2, 2007. In describing the college inspectors report that:

"The college provides academic and vocational education and offers courses in all sector subject areas although provision in agriculture, horticulture and animal care, and in history, philosophy and theology is very small."

At the time of the inspection the college was educating more than 2,000 16 to 18 year olds on a full-time basis and "the college provided courses for 900 pupils aged 14 to 16 from 28 local schools." Nine per cent of all students in the college were from minority ethnic groups which was above the local population proportion of people from an ethnic minority background. The college was judged to be outstanding in four areas of its work and good in one more, in this context it is notable that Equality of Opportunity was graded good rather than outstanding, but this is presumably because inspectors found that:

"the analysis and use of performance data relating to various groups of learners is an area for development".

The inspectors do, however, comment that,

"Provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The curriculum is highly responsive and inclusive ... The approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding."

"The range of pastoral, welfare and personal support services is excellent."

There is a "strong commitment to inclusion."

"Data show that the college has been successful in improving the success rates of 16 to 18-year-old males and that overall no significant group of learners underachieve regardless of age, gender or ethnic origin."

"The college chaplaincy offers valuable pastoral support for learners."

"The college's tutorial programme provides good personal and social education for learners. Tutorials ... promote the college concept of 'every learner matters'".

"The promotion of equality and diversity is good. ... Course teams conduct an annual audit relating to equal opportunities and, where appropriate, set targets for improvement. The college has been particularly effective in attracting learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or for whom engaging in learning is particularly challenging."

A search of the college website (using Google's advance search facilities) revealed:

178 results from www.nwhc.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR values, OR morals, OR ethics, OR spiritual.

About 13 results from www.nwhc.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR morals, OR spiritual.

About 17 results from www.nwhc.ac.uk for chaplain, OR chaplains, OR chaplaincy.

It looked as though digging deeper into the documentation behind the high number of references to the terms searched for might be profitable. Unfortunately this proved impossible as attempts to uncover these documents invariably led to some variation of either,

"Forbidden - You don't have permission to access /.../1864-agenda-item-54-equality-and-diversity-policy on this server."

or

"Unfortunately the address you are trying to navigate to does not have a corresponding page on our website."

However, I was able to download a copy of the college's standard job application form. Whilst it is easy to be cynical about formulaic equal opportunities policies it did seem to me striking that in this case the policy is placed prominently at the beginning of the form, religion gets a higher billing than it often does, and the statement about disabled applicants is more positive than one often sees:

"Equal Opportunity Policy

"North Warwickshire & Hinckley College aims to ensure that all job applicants are given equal consideration irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, religious beliefs, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or employment status.

"Applicants with disabilities should not be deterred from applying, since there are schemes available to help the College adapt working conditions to overcome specific aspects of disability. In any event, applicants who have a disability, and meet the person specification will be offered an interview."

The Visit

On arrival at the college I was met by Sam Thompson who introduced himself as the assistant to the Chaplain. In walking me to the Chaplaincy centre he took me by a small prayer room still set out with prayer and hymn books following a morning service. He also pointed out to me a wall display on aspects of Buddhism which had been set up by the Chaplain. In a brief discussion with Sam he identified himself as someone who had come to college to study and at that time had positively secular beliefs. However, he found himself interested in what is done by the chaplain and when a part-time paid position as assistant to the chaplain was advertised he applied for it and was successful. He described a role in which he assisted the chaplain in her work and did some administrative work within the chaplaincy centre.

The chaplain's office is located within an "events centre" which also houses the college counsellors. I arrived there as the Chaplain, Naomi Nixon, was settling into a teaching session with 8 students, all male, two of whom were from ethnic and religious minorities, one Hindu and one Muslim. The group talked about what they had done in a similar session the previous week, that having been a session on the life of the Buddha and the festival of Wesak. This week they were continuing with the story and Naomi invited students to locate Sri Lanka on a globe. The students sat around a fairly crowded table while they listened to and discussed the story of the Buddha's enlightenment, taken from a book by Anita Ganeri aimed at primary school children but wholly appropriate to this group. Naomi went over the Noble 8-fold path and ensured that all students understood this aspect of the story. Students then set about drawing a representation of one of the principles of the path which they were to set in a display box, which they could decorate, and place a bodhi leaf inside. The room had on display models made by this group in previous weeks. During the practical activity Naomi kept up a series of discussions with individuals or groups about the practical meaning of living according to the principles of the 8-fold path. The chaplaincy assistant, and a special needs assistant, Kate Oldham, helped students with their work and also participated in the discussions.

I asked most of the students in the group if they enjoyed these lessons and some were very positive, some were more neutral, but no-one expressed either hostility or the belief that they were a waste of time.

At the end of an hour the students left and I was introduced to, and was able to have a short conversation with, Safiyyah Patel, a young Muslim woman currently studying for a certificate in Muslim chaplaincy at Markfield Institute for Higher Education. She was on placement at the college. We spoke about obvious issues of whether it is likely that non-Muslim, and indeed, non-religious students would be happy approaching a hijab wearing Muslim woman to discuss some of the personal issues that 16 - 19 year old young people are likely to have, whether Muslim men are likely to seek help from a Muslim women chaplain, and whether Muslim practice in terms of individual men and women meeting alone didn't raise particular problems for a Muslim woman chaplain. I was very impressed at the degree to which all these issues had been carefully thought through, discussed thoroughly on the Markfield course, and could all be answered in ways that would certainly have convinced me had I been on an interviewing committee for a multi-faith chaplaincy position.

Next I had a meeting with Cheryl Keen (Development Coordinator, Foundational Learning and Support). This was a particularly useful meeting as it introduced me to a developing area of FE work that I had previously not known about or considered, "the Foundation Learning Tier" (FLT)¹. Whilst this has application to adult students, it is also aimed at learners from 14 to 19 for whom direct entry onto a level 2 or level 3 course is not appropriate. The most recent guidance about this development is contained in a document jointly published by QCA and LSC in May of this year (2009), "Foundation Learning Tier: Interim Guidance" (from which the next two quotations are taken). All FE colleges will have to participate in provision of a programme for the foundation learning by 2010

"For young people, the Foundation Learning Tier will form one of the national suites of provision alongside Diplomas; GCSEs / A Levels, and apprenticeships"

"The learning programme offer must encompass three distinct components:

1. subject or vocational knowledge, skills and understanding;
2. Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT; and,
3. personal and social development learning."

A footnote then tells us,

"The Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills framework (for further information see http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_13476.aspx) covers the same area of skills as Personal and Social Development. As part of the phased implementation of Progression Pathways, we will be moving towards using one framework (PLTS), ensuring that it is appropriate for both young people and adult learners."

A particular REC concern here might be to look more closely at the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills, which at first sight do not accommodate much that would normally be incorporated within spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but which may have some scope to be developed in that direction.

In discussing the FLT with Cheryl Keen her own enthusiasm for it was evident as it allowed and encouraged work she has clearly been passionate about for some time. She had many examples of students who left school looking like they would never work but who, through innovative teaching and proactive pastoral support at the college, had gone on to make successful careers in areas like catering. In designing programmes for the FLT students, and in guiding them into employment, an FE college is at a significant advantage over schools because of the extent of the links it has with the local employer community.

After the meeting with Cheryl I had a late lunch with Naomi and talked about her role as a chaplain. What became very evident was the extent to which on being appointed she had had to define and develop the role. The session I had seen her take with the morning group was a weekly tutorial lesson. She has no automatic duty or right to teach any of these, but by offering sessions of different sorts that students on different courses might find interesting she has been able to persuade many

¹ Now 'Foundation Learning': the QCDA website explains "Foundation Learning was known as the foundation learning tier until August 2009."

tutors to book her to do tutorial lessons with their students. The continuing and growing success of such lessons depends on her being able to deliver material that students respond positively to and tutors find relevant to their students and the courses they teach.

We talked a little about the tension between being a specifically Christian minister working in an all-faiths and, predominantly, no-faith environment. Naomi emphasised the degree to which there can be no set rules about this but it is largely a case of developing a reputation with staff and students as someone who is a good listener, has a range of interpersonal, group-work and teaching skills, and is not going to push a personal agenda. That said, Naomi is very clear that she is a Christian minister with a Christian commitment that she is happy to share with anyone who wants to listen. And she offers regular Christian worship for those who want to attend. This is in no way incompatible with being respectful of, and knowledgeable about, a range of other religions. It happens to be the case that the principal of the college is a Christian and a vicar's wife, and Naomi is grateful for the support she gets from her. She did however think it important to mention that she was appointed under a previous principal.

Appendix 5 - Visit to the College of North East London, June 4th 2009

People spoken with:

Paul Head, the Principal

Jan Dunster, Assistant Director, Learner Information and Support

Fr Simon Clark, Chaplain

Pre-Visit

At my first meeting with John Wise, chief executive of fbfe, he suggested a number of establishments I should visit where chaplaincy work is well established and where FBVE issues are taken seriously. The College of North East London, and specifically its Principal, Paul Head, were a place and a person John insisted I should visit

Prior to the visit I read the college's latest Ofsted report, based on an inspection conducted between 12th and 16th May 2008. At that time,

"Working with schools in three local authorities, more than 400 pupils aged 14-16 attend the college to take courses in construction, business, mathematics and science, health and care, art and design, hair and beauty, sport and public services."

Whilst the report remarks on significant numbers of students in the 16 - 18 range doing different courses it does not give a global figure for them. Overall the college obtained a collection of grades 1 and 2 for its central functions and 1, 2 and 3 for its 'Sector subject areas'. The college did however obtain a contributory grade 1 for equality of opportunity and the report notes,

"Guidance and support arrangements for learners are excellent. Social, as well as educational, inclusion is outstanding. The college is an active participant or leader in many community projects to build social cohesion.... CONEL has successfully developed a culture of mutual respect where diversity is valued and learners from different backgrounds enjoy studying together in a safe and welcoming environment."

In the 26 page report the chaplain gets a single mention,

"Students benefit from counsellors, a mental health worker, a multi-faith chaplain and a prayer room."

It is significant for the purposes of this report that inspectors judged that,

"Group tutorials are well planned and successful" "Pastoral support for students is very good. Personal tutors, teachers and college agencies readily make themselves available to help and advise students on a variety of social, emotional and financial issues. In doing so, they successfully remove barriers to study. Tutorials are well attended ..."

Students with religious commitment can only benefit from what the inspectors report on in terms of,

"The college's procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity are outstanding. It has clear policies covering racial equality, disability and gender. Groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds perform well compared to those in similar colleges."

The only specific reference in the report to religion notes that,

"Women-only courses in health and social care and construction have been specifically designed to meet the needs of women returning to education and training or those whose religious beliefs make it difficult for them to attend mainstream programmes."

A search of the college website (using Google's advance search facilities) revealed:

About 28 results from www.conel.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR values, OR morals, OR ethics, OR spiritual.

6 results from www.conel.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR morals, OR spiritual.

2 results from www.conel.ac.uk for chaplain OR chaplains OR chaplaincy. (0.44 seconds)

Digging into some of those results I found a document explaining:

"The College has established a Multi Faith Chaplaincy which will provide spiritual guidance to learners and advise on how worship needs can be met."

The Visit

Having arrived at the college early for my appointment, once I had identified myself, had my photo taken and been given a badge, I was invited to find my own way to a refectory from where I would be collected in due course. Whilst this may not seem particularly significant it made an initial good impression as no one was worried about what I might see and who I might talk to left alone. It was notable in the refectory, just after what I presume was a lunchtime rush, that students were gathered mainly in quite diverse groups, sitting at tables and chatting, or reading. There was a generally relaxed feel and no one took much notice of me when I sat at a table within easy earshot of two groups of students. There was a buzz of conversation in the large room but the atmosphere was calm and non-threatening. During about twenty minutes I picked out conversations in two or three different languages as well as English. Then I was collected by Fr Simon, the chaplain, who took me to the principal's office where I met Paul Head and Jan Dunster.

I quickly recapitulated the purposes of my visit and Paul gave me a brief outline of the recent history of the college and its successes and notable improvement. A banner outside the building proclaimed a 93% successful course completion rate in the last year and that provided a focus for a discussion of the difficulties many FE students face in completing studies and the ways in which the college can try to help them meet those difficulties. Paul was clear that the college was an academic community that must be judged on the basis of its results. However, the areas of equality of opportunity, pastoral support and tutorial work were not to be seen as bolt-on extras to the main work of the college but rather essential components of a total package that facilitates learning.

Jan Dunster spoke in some detail about the tutorial programme and other aspects of learning support. She said that it is an essential aspect of the success of the college that all aspects of learning support are effectively co-ordinated so that when any member of staff becomes aware of a problem with an individual student s/he will know whom the student should be referred to if s/he is unable to deal with the issue herself. As an example of specific response to particular need Jan referred to a system the college now has to enable students to be tested for chlamydia, the point here being that for many of the students their lives are too busy and complicated for them to find time to track down facilities and make and keep appointments outside college, or if they do, it may well be at the expense of time that could be spent studying. Bringing advice, help and support into the college directly facilitates improved learning outcomes. Paul, Jan and Fr Simon all contributed to a discussion that gave examples of the sorts of extreme circumstances many students had to battle with in order to cope with their studies, often involving housing issues or care of children or elderly or disabled family members.

I asked specifically about the tutorial programme and mentioned a conversation I had had with a tutor at another college who, whilst very dedicated to teaching her subject area, had been somewhat dismissive of the wider tutorial role. Paul said it was very important that teachers in FE have credibility and expertise in their specialist areas and in his view it is unrealistic and counter-productive to try to turn all tutors into experts in all the different areas that need to be touched on as part of a successful tutorial programme. Jan took up this theme and explained how she oversees the planning and coordination of the tutorial programme for all students. Where specialist input is particularly needed it is sourced, and for everything else tutors are provided with good quality materials to use that minimise their need for preparation. I mentioned here that religion is a particularly difficult area for non-specialists to deal with and was told that the college has already trialled AFAN¹ materials and was currently considering embedding them within the colleges tutorial programme.

Turning to the appointment of a college chaplain, Paul said that he had no doubt about the importance of the work he did. Although it should not be relevant I asked whether Paul was personally religious and he replied that he was not but was aware of the importance of religion as part of the lives of many of his students and staff. Fr Simon described his work as falling into different areas. There were specific things he could contribute from time to time to college activities. Then there were issues concerning religion that arose spontaneously in different areas of college life. Here, when his own competence was challenged he relied on knowing where to go for further information or help within the wider multi-faith community. Then there was the vitally important role of simply

¹ AFAN - "All Faiths and None" - an organisation promoting work on dealing with religions and beliefs in FE

being available to talk with students who needed pastoral support. In this connection some, for example many Polish students, would treat him with respect as a priest, whereas with other students his credibility had to be won on personal grounds. He cited, as by no means untypical, a student who following a bereavement had insisted that he had no religion and didn't want to talk about religion. However, what then started as a more general pastoral conversation quickly became positively theological as the student wanted to talk about the meaning and purpose of life and the possibility of life after death.

A discussion about the different religious groups within the college, and the community cohesion agenda, led on to the point being made that where there had been problems in the past it had not been so much between adherents of different religions but between followers of different traditions or ethnic origins within a single religion. Here a specific CONEL initiative had been the setting up, in 2004, of 'BRACE' (Building Relationships Across Cultures Everywhere), a students' organisation which aims to encourage dialogue and friendship between young people of all ethnicities and faiths and which has done work not only within the college but also in the wider Haringey community. Paul made the point that the college goes out of its way to be aware of important dates and festivals for its students and mentioned that Kurdish New Year, for instance, was of particular significance within the college.

I asked how, in a college as big as CONEL, and with so many students, many of them part-time, students become aware of the help that is available to them, for example the chaplaincy. Jan explained the importance of a thorough and well thought through induction procedure as well as the coordinated teamwork mentioned previously amongst all who have dealings with students. In this connection Fr Simon spoke of his close working relationship with counsellors and the importance of mutual respect and a clear understanding of roles that leads him sometimes to refer students to counsellors, and vice versa.

I came away from CONEL very impressed with what is in place and the clear commitment and dedication of the management to providing support to all their students to enable them to study and better their lives. The obvious lesson here for some other colleges is the importance of active and intelligent support for chaplaincy and FBVE from senior management, and the need to put in place effective management structures that ensure that good intentions are translated into measures that support students and enrich their college experience.

Subsequent to my visit a merger between CONEL and Enfield College was approved and the Colleges joined on August 1, under the new name of The College of Haringey, Enfield, and North East London. Paul Head is the principal of the new institution.

Appendix 6 - Visit to North Devon College, July 15th 2009

People spoken with:

Mohamed Patel, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator

Pre-Visit

I asked Harjinder Singh to recommend colleges and contacts in the west country that I might approach to arrange a visit. I initially wrote to both North Devon and East Devon only to find that they were going through a merger and my email was responded to by Mohamed Patel from North Devon. Mohamed was supportive from the outset but finding a mutually suitable date in term time eventually proved impossible so this meeting took place after the end of term. This had its disadvantages but also advantages as Mohamed was able to give me time when he was not overwhelmed with other work and responsibilities.

Prior to the visit I read the college's most recent inspection report, which is based on a visit by inspectors in October 2006, and also a letter sent from an HMI in January '09, after a visit in connection with finding good practice for a report being written on 'Social Responsibility and Community Cohesion', and a letter written following a monitoring visit of June 9th '09.

The last full report gives the college the grade of 'outstanding' for each of the main areas inspected, which are: 'effectiveness of provision', 'capacity to improve', 'achievements and standards', 'quality of provision', 'leadership and management'. The report describes the college thus:

"North Devon College is a medium-sized tertiary college with its main site in Barnstaple, serving a large rural and dispersed local community. The college is the sixth form centre for all the 11-16 schools in the area. The college operates off-site provision in Barnstaple, Bideford, Bude and Holsworthy."

The report notes that the catchment area of the college "is predominantly white" and that the college, in the previous year, "had 2,223 16-18 year old full-time equivalent learners." The inspectors' comment:

"Educational and social inclusion is outstanding. ... The college has a strong and tested reputation for working within the community to widen participation and support disadvantaged learners. Commitment to, and the promotion of, equality and diversity are strong... Learners receive excellent guidance and support. The needs of learners are identified early and support is provided promptly. Tutorial support is effective for both learners aged 16-18 and adults."

The inspectorate visit of January '09 made comment on,

"The ethos of respect and tolerance supported by highly effective community partnership that enables all students to feel safe and supported to achieve their aspirations and academic potential."

The monitoring visit notes the extent to which the merger with East Devon college, located in Tiverton, is proving successful and the extent of the movement towards embedding good practice from North Devon in the East Devon campus, where now "Students speak highly of the support they receive from teachers."

A search of the college website (using Google's advance search facilities) revealed:

About 65 results from www.ndevon.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR values, OR morals, OR ethics, OR spiritual.)

About 45 results from www.ndevon.ac.uk for religion, OR faith, OR belief, OR morals, OR spiritual. "Your search - chaplain, OR chaplains, OR chaplaincy site:www.ndevon.ac.uk/ - did not match any documents."

The relatively high number of web pages found by these searches largely reflects a successful A'level course in religious studies taught at the college.

The Visit

Whilst waiting in reception after arrival at the college I noted two prominent posters



The 'Mo' that students and staff are being encouraged to talk to here is Mohamed Patel, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator at the college.



The second picture shows a poster designed by students at the college that is probably self-explanatory

The two pictures were the first topic of conversation with Mohamed Patel when we met. He explained that equality and diversity work is a big challenge with students as the vast majority of them have encountered few opportunities for mixing with minority groups. Possibilities for providing

students with exposure to multi-cultural and multi-racial identities was limited but had been identified by the College as of substantial importance. I asked Mohamed about the level of support he gets from staff to which his reply emphasised the high level of support and openness he finds in his work from his managers and very many of his colleagues although much work still needs to be done to raise consciousness and embed appropriate attitudes within the whole organization.

I asked about religious diversity at the college and was told that there was an active Christian Union and, more surprisingly, that Buddhist and Pagan groups have received support from both the student body and the staff. As to other religions there is an interesting relationship with the United Arab Emirates which sends groups of students to study in the UK. These students, all male, are spread around a number of colleges in England and the colleges chosen tend to be in rural areas as those who administer the scheme believe there is less chance of their students meeting the temptations of English society, and its youth culture in such colleges - these are thought to be more prominently available in heavily urban areas. About fifteen of these UAE students come annually to North Devon and stay for at least three years to complete their studies. As a result of the annual arrival of these students from the UAE, the college has a dedicated and fully functional Muslim prayer room on site that is used daily by the students.

The college does not have, at the moment, a chaplain, although Mohamed said that he had developed good relations with the Exeter Anglican diocese, particularly with Rev Cate Edmonds, who has been very helpful in work on a college code of conduct for religious groups within college. There has been discussions about securing a part-time Anglican chaplain to work with students of all faiths and none. The Christian Union has good relations with local churches and often brings in local clergy to talk to its meetings and participate in worship.

I asked Mohamed about his contacts with students and he explained that he has input through the Tutorial system usually tailored to meet the requirements of each student group, so, for example, when talking to students studying Geography the emphasis might be on the various waves of immigration into the South West and current issues around migrant workers and asylum seekers. There are also compulsory modules in a number of courses leading to qualifications where he can have input, either directly with students or sometimes advising tutors.

I wondered to what extent Mohamed had a direct pastoral role and he spoke of the very good student support services at the college, a full-time nurse who covers a number of specialist areas over and above first aid, and the excellent counselors. He said that he sometimes gets some 'spillover' or referrals from the 'drop-in' sessions held by student services. Students themselves are now involved in a peer mentoring scheme.

Sport is a major subject of study at the college and Mohamed, working with the local police, had managed an anti-bullying week within sports studies.

Given the comparative lack of religious and ethnic diversity in the college and the surrounding area I wondered why the college had made such an effort to produce high quality documentation and policies in this area. Mohamed said that in his experience legislation is key. Good colleges always respond to new statutory requirements, especially if they are likely to be the focus of inspection, and he believed that part of his role was to be highly vigilant about relevant new legislation and to alert college's senior management to developments and present practical proposals about what needs to be done to meet new requirements. He felt that to get intrinsically worthwhile stuff done it is often necessary to attach it to statutory requirements.

In relation to statutory requirements Mohamed introduced me to the acronym SORB, standing for "sexual orientation, race and belief" these being areas where legislation requires measures to ensure non-discrimination, but there is no statutory duty to promote these as there is in the case of race, gender and disability equality.

The A' Level Religious Studies course at the college is regularly over-subscribed and, it, together with Psychology, are the most successful subjects within the Social Sciences department. Surprisingly though, Religious Education is not offered at GCSE whereas Business Studies, English, Film Studies, Human Physiology & Health, Mathematics, Sociology, and Spanish all are. The A' Level Religious Studies course is described in the current college prospectus thus:

"This is a multidimensional course which develops the students' ability to think rationally about religion, ethics and human experiences and the world. ...The AS Level consists of three main areas of study. The modules are linked making a positive contribution to the understanding and illumination of religious perspectives on aspects of life: An introduction to Religion & Human Experience; Religious Experience; The Authority & Inspiration of Sacred Writings; Introduction to Aspects of Major World Faith; Buddhism, and a module on Religion & Ethics. The A2 Level comprises of Religion & Human Experience; Studies in Religion & Culture, and Religion & Ethics."

Appendix 7 - Meetings and discussions about faith, beliefs and values education in further education

Shortly after I began work on this project I had a meeting, on Dec 1, 2008, with John Wise, the Chief Executive of 'The National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education' (commonly abbreviated as 'fbfe')¹. Fbfe maintains a team of regional development officers working with colleges across England and at the time this report is being written (October '09) it is working with the Learning & Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) to develop a non-statutory framework for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (smc) in Further Education.

The purpose of the meeting was to give me some background into chaplaincy work in further education and the campaign to secure appropriate curriculum space for faith, beliefs and values education within the FE sector. Subsequent to that meeting I attended meetings of the fbfe regional forum, one meeting of the fbfe council, representing the REC as a substitute for John Keast, and an fbfe day conference. These meetings all gave me opportunities to learn about the field of further education both through their formal business and through the opportunities for informal discussion with many people active in the field. Among the people I met through these meetings was Marion Plant, principal of North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, who invited me to visit her college which I did. Harjinder Singh and Jennifer Roberts were both extremely and repeatedly helpful in suggesting colleges to visit and people to speak with.

Later I had further one-to-one meetings with :

1. **The Revd Dr John Breadon**, Churches' National Adviser for Further Education, Board of Education of the Archbishops' Council (on April 14th 2009)

This was an invaluable meeting as at the time it took place I was seriously confused about many aspects of FE generally and had been told contradictory things about chaplaincy and FBVE in FE. John was able to reassure me that my confusion was entirely understandable and that it was due partly to many people not having caught up with recent changes in structures and others being misinformed or over-optimistic about current and likely future developments. Through occasional subsequent email correspondence I felt supported and to some extent led by John's knowledge of the field and honest appraisal of institutions and developments.

2. **Lat Blaylock**, RE Today Adviser, a NATRE Executive Member, a long-serving member of the board of the REC, and a leading light in the 'Dare to Engage' (D2E) initiative (on April 17th 2009)

At the very beginning of my work on this project I read Lat's report to the REC of 2007, "Proposals for developing Religious Education in 16-19 settings." Whilst it was remarkable to realise how much had changed in the relatively short space of time between Lat's work and my own, much that he wrote proved still to be true when I began my survey of the scene, e.g. "There are ... outstanding concerns over the funding arrangements for general RE in colleges."

Prior to our meeting Lat had sent me a copy of a further report he had just written on the recent activities of the organisation "Dare to Engage" (D2E). This is a specifically Christian initiative (though it also works with members of other faiths and with atheists), to produce material that can be used with the 16 -19 age group, mainly as day (or longer) conferences. Rather than simply producing material for others to use D2E take their material to FE settings and run sessions for students. D2E utilises the arts, particularly but not exclusively visual arts and drama, to raise issues for exploration. Through conducting questionnaires amongst those who participate in its conferences it is building up an invaluable database of information from many hundreds of student responses to its materials and about their concerns and thoughts on religion, spirituality and morality. Lat's report on D2E's recent activity highlights:

"the purchase of a copy [of a D2E resource pack] for every 16-19 school and college in Wales in a collaborative piece of work between the Welsh Assembly, D2E and the Welsh Association of SACREs. The folder, which provides 'all you need for three days of conference work' has been widely used as well as widely sold. The sales in Wales also enabled Toni Coulton and Lat Blaylock to take key roles in

¹ John Breadon, Brian Gates and John Keast were also present at the meeting.

the conference that the Welsh Assembly ran in Cardiff and Flint (video linked), to which two teachers from each of Wales' 400+ schools and colleges for 16-19s were invited. This Saturday conference was attended by about 130, and also showcased work for 16-19s from BBC Wales and other sources. We have always hoped that our relatively small scale activism would prompt the 'powers that be' to do their job well with regard to 16-19 RE for all. The Welsh Assembly has done so magnificently, and this support is one of our most pleasing results this year."

Lat raised the question: why will the English authorities not offer similar support to the FE colleges under their umbrella?

As well as talking about D2E's activities I put to Lat the view that had often been put to me that having had RE throughout the years of compulsory schooling why should it be forced on unwilling students in FE settings. Lat first made the obvious point that the statutory requirement for RE in schools is often not completely met, and when it is what is offered is more often than not less than optimal. Further, he said that his experience and research suggests that, done well, students in FE respond very positively to appropriate input and therefore they might vote for it if the quality of what was on offer was of a consistently high standard. Beyond this Lat believed that the distinction between education and training remains important and that any institution – such as an FE college - aspiring to be educational has to incorporate an element of spiritual and moral development.

3. **Alan Murray**, visiting fellow at King's College London, leading light in the 'All Faiths and None' (AFAN) initiative, formerly Churches' National Adviser on Further Education.

As John Breadon's predecessor Alan was able to give me a potted history of the push for chaplaincy and for an entitlement to RE, or spiritual, moral, or social care and development for the huge numbers of young people who now study in FE colleges. Alan was clear about the potential costs of achieving the aim, and the practical constraints on governments. Now that a legal requirement for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in FE did not seem likely in the bill currently going through Parliament Alan believes it is essential that we all fight for a non-statutory national framework applicable to FE, on the model of that for religious education in schools.

Alan spoke also of the work of AFAN, and particularly of the website that he believes to be a very exciting development and potentially a very useful resource both for teachers but also more directly for students in the 16 -19 age range. The particular strength of the site is the degree to which it is interactive and allows students to upload material and participate in discussions.

Appendix 8 - Revisiting the recommendations of Lat Blaylock's 2007 report

Lat Blaylock made eight specific recommendations which are worth reconsideration at this time. Here I quote them in full and then offer some comment after each recommendation.

1. “*Research*: Policy makers need to access practice about the successes, problems and opportunities. The RE Partnership should initiate a comprehensive piece of information gathering:
 - to collect, analyse and report upon, in a professional and systematic manner, current and recent work
 - to undertake a new study in all FE and sixth form colleges and schools with sixth forms, of their policy and practice regarding RE, citizenship, values, beliefs and faith, SMSCD and community cohesion issues.

This research needs to explore the whole institutional curriculum, in both its academic and vocational aspects. This requires new research, but should also build upon existing thinking, for example the work of Dr Andrew Wright at King's College London, in association with NEAFE / FIFE. Research should include an exploration of student perspectives and their perceived learning needs about the areas of VBF. This recommendation connects with the RE Partnership's main national strategy. This would require resources of about £140k”

Whilst this current report goes some small way to investigate some of the matters referred to here it has not been able to be as comprehensive in either scope or depth as was anticipated by Lat's proposal. My experience suggests that researching the current policy and practice of all FE institutions would prove very difficult as it would, to some extent, require the cooperation of many institutions that would, for a range of reasons, be unlikely to be prepared to become involved.

2. “*Multi agency working*: The TDA (Training and Development Agency), the QIA (Quality Improvement Agency), the LSC (Learning and Skills(Council), the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), the CEL (Centre for Excellence in Leadership) and other bodies and agencies of government are all implicated in the proposals made here. The REC will seek to work collaboratively with other organisations such as NEAFE / FIFE as well. Local SACREs should also have a role to play in initiating shared activity. This paper does not suggest how these and other agencies might share the development work envisaged, but clearly the DfES is the key point from which directions can be set, and working through appropriate national agencies is the key to developing practice that has a comprehensive impact on 16-19 provision.”

As already mentioned the FE landscape has changed in the last two years and many of the organisations mentioned here have gone or amalgamated, however the principle that the REC and its member bodies should engage in building collaborative relationships with the relevant bodies active within the FE world remains sound.

3. “*Case Studies*: The DfES should commission QCA, in co-operation with LSC, CEL and other agencies if appropriate, to prepare and publish a wide ranging series of case studies of good practice in how colleges engage with VBF, SMSCD, religion and belief, including such examples as modular curricular enrichment programmes, cross curricular engagement with VBF and provision of opportunities for religious and philosophical learning. Case studies of developing RS A levels and of spiritual and ethical aspects of other curricular provision should be included. This development may need to be linked to funding arrangements that enable Colleges to develop and share ‘best practice’ in replicable ways. Colleges of all kinds are rightly concerned about community cohesion, inter cultural education, inclusion and anti-racism. These issues are increasingly understood to have religious dimensions. This would require initial resources of about £30k”

This remains a good idea but requires not only funding by the DCSF, but for that body to initiate this action, perhaps unlikely at the present time.

4. “*Awareness training for FE staff*. Regional, one day events for one member of staff over three years would need 8 regional events for 60 attendees each. A programme of funded regional staff development days that every college could access, planned over three years to disseminate best practice is needed. This could build partly upon FIFE / NEAFE links that

already exist and draw attention to the value of the place of RE, VBF and SMSCD within the curriculum (and in some cases in the wider life of the college / school). Such a programme would aim to meet the needs of 16-19 staff to see how to move forward in practical provision of enrichment opportunities. A further programme of regional contributions to senior leadership development would aim to enable college staff in management and governance to address the problems and difficulties they face on the frontier between RE, VBF, SMSCD and community cohesion issues. College Principals and senior leaders are the key audience in this setting. This would require resources of about £40k.”

I am doubtful whether college principals and senior leaders would come out on this training in any significant numbers. A further concern relates to the extent to which training given on such a course would impinge on classroom practice. The ‘cascade’ method of CPD delivery has a patchy history in schools and there are good reasons to suppose it would be even less successful in FE settings.

5. “*Faith Awareness: a mobile exhibition*: The RE Partnership should, with others, initiate and co-ordinate a programme to enable the sharing of good practice in RE, VBF and SMSCD work, which should include: A mobile exhibition on ‘Faith in Britain’ that would form the hub of ‘faith awareness weeks’ for colleges, around which local engagement could be planned by any Sixth form or College, providing a starting point for curricular enrichment. Development of a ‘hub exhibition’ to enable colleges to run local faiths awareness weeks in college. This might need to be a travelling exhibit that incorporates its own accommodation (Most college shave little or no space for such events). The exhibit would be national, but colleges would need support to use it in locally alert ways that connected with, for example, faith communities and students from different faiths. This complex task will require a one-off cost to develop and then disseminate – interactive web and publication resources will accompany it. This will require resources of about £180k. A target for the first 18 months of the work might be to have run and evaluated such events in 12 colleges.”

This is again an excellent idea, but one for which funding in the immediate future, certainly from government sources, seems unlikely.

6. “*Curricular provision*: RE for all, RS A level, VBF or other qualifications. The Partnership should initiate with partners (e.g. SACREs, faith community groups) the provision of model day conferences in sixth form and college settings, to make links between various curricular areas and religion and belief, and to provide the legal requirements of RE for all through curricular enrichment. This would provide opportunities for observing good practice in curricular enrichment. This requires the development and dissemination of already existing work in this area, and takes account of the law: 16-19 RE for all is required in school sixth form settings, while sixth form colleges must provide RE for students who want it. OFSTED evidence shows a startling level of non-compliance (80%). Quality is an issue even where compliance is not, but there are models of excellence. Related measures should strengthen AS and A2 in colleges will including specific support and guidance for FE & Sixth Form Colleges wishing to commence curricular provision of AS and A2 RS courses and to build up the VBF enrichment of other courses in religion, beliefs and values. This would require resources of about £80k.”

Whilst it is possible the some VI form settings might take advantage of model day conferences if they were offered and provided at no cost, my guess is that take up would not justify the investment. Statutory requirements are irrelevant in a situation where they can be ignored with impunity. (Indeed one wonders how long is necessary before a defence of desuetude¹ becomes available to those ignoring statutory requirements in this field!

7. “*Curriculum development*: The LSC’s partnership with NEAFE / FIFE has led to some developments in initiating in-college work. While some of this involves multi faith chaplaincy training, it may present a model for curricular development as well. New models may also be needed. This experience can provide a platform for further development. Guidance from the DFES through the Learning and Skills Council is needed to clarify and develop the place of

¹ “In law, desuetude (from the Latin word *desuetudo*: outdated, no longer custom) is a doctrine that causes statutes, similar legislation or legal principles to lapse and become unenforceable by a long habit of non-enforcement or lapse of time. It is what happens to laws that are not repealed when they become obsolete. It is the legal doctrine that long and continued non-use of a law renders it invalid, at least in the sense that courts will no longer tolerate punishing its transgressors.” - wikipedia

colleges in providing both entitlements and enrichment opportunities for holistic learning that includes VBF, SMSCD and RE. This needs to connect the concerns of RE with the concerns of citizenship education: one way to see this is to add spiritual and moral development to the more secure elements of social and cultural development already included in citizenship education. It is allied to concerns about whether colleges can and should do more to make holistic education a reality. It will have an impact upon the ways schools and colleges tackle community cohesion issues.”

A problem here may be with the assumption that citizenship generally, and social and cultural development as part of it, are well established in 16 - 19 settings. This did not appear to be the case in many of the colleges I visited researching this report.

8. “*Project funding*: Biddable funds to run projects that make space for VBF, RE and SMSCD work is likely to be the single most effective way of making an impact on this difficult area. These funds should target the impact of current work, enable curriculum development and might also model (for example) inter faith sport, community action or charitable, work, based in FE and sixth form settings. The possible accreditation of such work for students in the context of Vocational Education is an area where QCA should be invited to take things forward. (Referring to work-related learning materials that illustrate good practice in VBF, SMSCD and RE, and relating to vocational pathways in such areas as business, leisure and tourism and health and social care.) This would require a new fund to be established, from which Colleges could bid to develop and showcase their work in the VBF / RE / SMSC / Community Cohesion areas.”

Whilst this is an excellent approach, drawing on the creativity of teachers and managers within colleges, it is not clear where the biddable funds are to come from at a time when, when public debt is currently estimated to reach £1.100,000,000,000¹ by 2011, FE looks hugely vulnerable to swathing cutbacks in the immediate future. As a college principal explained to me very recently, “FE is the bit of education not much used by the middle classes, so it is where massive cutbacks are unlikely to have too much political impact!”

¹ As a schoolboy I was taught that a billion was a million ‘squared’ (raised to the power of 2) and a trillion was a million cubed (raised to the power of 3): common usage now seems to be that a billion is a thousand million and a trillion is a million million. However, I cannot bring myself to use a terminology that seems both open to misunderstanding and so etymologically counter-intuitive: hence £1.100,000,000,000

Appendix 9 - What the experience of “spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” in schools may have to teach further education

During September 2009 the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) conducted a consultation as part of a project to prepare a non-statutory Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) framework for the FE sector. The results of that consultation are not yet known, but many people concerned with matters of faith, beliefs and values in further education are optimistic that such a framework will be useful and an important step forward. Sadly, the experience in schools, where there has been a statutory duty to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since 1988, does not offer much encouragement. This short paper looks at how the statutory requirement was translated into practice in schools, and how the inspection system failed to support the intentions of Parliament in this matter. This may point to difficulties that could arise in FE settings, particularly in view of the fact that, in FE, SMSC has no roots in religious education and collective worship. The outline of a proposal for a way forward is suggested in a subsequent appendix to this report.

A brief history of legislation mandating spiritual and moral purposes for state schools

The famous 1944 Education Reform Act had in its preamble a requirement that local education authorities should

“contribute to the spiritual, moral, physical and mental development of the community by securing that efficient education shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.”

The 1988 Education Reform Act presumably sought to strengthen and extend the requirement of the preamble to the '44 Act when, on its first page, it laid duties on LEAs, governors and headteachers, and indeed the Secretary of State for Education, to exercise their functions so as to secure that every maintained school:

- a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”

John Patton, when Secretary of State for Education certainly took his responsibilities in this regard seriously. In 1992, he passed the Education (Schools) Act that brought Ofsted into being together with the requirement that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools had, amongst his functions,

“the general duty of keeping the Secretary of State informed about—... the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at those schools.”

By the time of the 1996 Education Act, which consolidated previous education acts, we get to section 351 before, under the heading “General duties in respect of the curriculum,” we have a repetition of the rubric of the 1988 Act concerning the aims of the curriculum.

Currently, the statutory duty on schools to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development derives from Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act which repeats again the words of the '88 Act although curiously substituting ‘later’ for ‘adult’ in b) - perhaps someone realised that young people of 17 who have left education were technically excluded by the reference to ‘adult’.

Whilst the promotion of social and cultural development in schools is by no means unproblematic the rest of this paper will consider only spiritual and moral development in educational settings.

Spiritual development - the problem

Debate about moral education, certainly in Parliament, has generally been oriented to the notion that schools should somehow contribute to helping young people grow up to be honest, decent and productive members of society, something that politicians take for granted that schools can do. But the notion that schools should promote “spiritual” development, whilst generally supported, although more in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons, has often been acknowledged to be somewhat problematic. In the parliamentary debates of 1944 the Archbishop of Canterbury (William Temple) said:

"I am always a little frightened of the word "spiritual," and when people say that education ought to have a "spiritual" foundation I feel that I want them to define what they mean. When it is said that education ought to have a religious foundation I should myself be much nearer knowing what they mean." (Hansard)

In the House of Commons, also in 1944, Professor Gruffydd (University of Wales) expressed eloquently the concerns of some, although probably fewer then than now, and he is worth quoting at some length:

"I hope that this House will not agree with the Lords on this matter. The word "spiritual" is either quite innocuous and meaningless or it has a definite meaning. If it is innocuous there is no need to insert it, and if it has a meaning at all it is a meaning that a large part of the community would object to see expressed in an Act of Parliament. We have heard a lot of talk about the balance which the President of the Board of Education has managed to achieve among the different sections of the community, and to insert the word "spiritual," the most numinous word one could possibly find, into an Act of Parliament will entirely upset any understanding dependent on that balance. I would explain what I mean by that.

"There are large sections of the religious community in this country who believe that the schools should teach the people religion. They are generally either Catholics or Anglicans. We have made provision for them; they have their own voluntary schools and we have met them very generously in this matter and have provided means by which they can follow the dictates of their own conscience. But there is also a very large section of the religious population of the country, Non-conformists and people not attached to any Church, who object to the very idea that the State, and especially the local education authorities, should be put in charge of the spiritual teaching of the country. I hope that what I regard as an injustice, and even an impertinence, to these people will not be allowed, and I think we should disagree with the Lords in this matter. Before I sit down I should like to say that there is a popular cliché of thought going round among the very same people who at the end of the last war were all for licence and irreligion. Now they are all hot and bothered about religion. They are no more religious now than they were then." (Hansard)

Moral development - the problem

In a very famous paper entitled *Modern Moral Philosophy*, published in the journal *Philosophy* in January 1958, Elisabeth Anscombe put forward three theses of which the first two are:

"it is not profitable for us at present to do moral philosophy; that should be laid aside at any rate until we have an adequate philosophy of psychology, in which we are conspicuously lacking. ...

"the concepts of obligation, and duty--*moral* obligation and *moral* duty, that is to say--and of what is *morally* right and wrong, and of the *moral* sense of "ought," ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives, and are only harmful without it."

When Anscombe wrote about moral language being survivals from an earlier conception of ethics she was making a point that is central to Alasdair MacIntyre's 'After Virtue' project. MacIntyre is a Roman Catholic philosopher who has specialised throughout a very long career in questions of ethics, politics and social science. In his 1967 book, 'A Short History of Ethics' he pointed out that different communities have given different accounts of what constitutes virtue. For example, he explains that to suggest humility is a virtue would have seemed nonsensical to Aristotle or any of his Greek contemporaries. MacIntyre has developed this point in a series of books beginning in 1981 with his 'After Virtue' in which he argues that modern efforts to derive and explain morality rationally, from first principles, as was done by Kant, or Bentham and Mill, have wholly failed. For MacIntyre morality is always morality as understood and developed within a particular tradition of thought and will be associated with a particular community, often one with a religious foundation. Anscombe was arguing that it only makes sense to make explicitly moral statements within a world where there is a shared understanding of morality. MacIntyre agrees and asserts that while it is entirely appropriate and necessary to speak of morality from within a particular moral tradition, a problem for the modern world is that there is no common currency that allows different moral traditions to settle moral disputes in a way acceptable to rival moral traditions.

Having introduced the notion of 'virtue' it is worth making a point here about the extent to which a 'virtues' approach to moral education is strongly supported by eminent modern researchers working on problems of ethics within philosophy, the social sciences, and in neurological science:

“An important feature of virtue-based approaches is that they aim to educate children not just by teaching rules, but by shaping perceptions, emotions and intuitions. This is done in part through providing exemplars of particular virtues, often in the form of narratives (MacIntyre, 1981; Vitz, 1990). In epic poems (e.g., Homer’s *Illiad*, the *Mahabharata* in India, the *Shahnameh* in Persia), and in stories of the lives of saints and other moral exemplars (e.g. the Gospels, or the Sunna of Muhammad), protagonists exemplify virtuous conduct and illustrate the terrible consequences of moral failings.

“A second important feature of virtue ethics is that virtues are usually thought to be multiple (rather than being reducible to a single “master virtue” or principle), local (saturated with cultural meaning), and often context- or role-specific. The virtues prized by a nomadic culture differ from those of settled agriculturalists, and from those of city-dwellers (Ibn-Khaldun, 2004; MacIntyre, 1981; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996). A third feature of virtue-based approaches is that they emphasize practice and habit, rather than propositional knowledge and deliberative reasoning. Virtues are skills of social perception and action (Churchland, 1998; Dewey, 1922; McDowell, 1979) that must be acquired and refined over a lifetime. Morality is not a body of knowledge that can be learned by rote or codified in general ethical codes or decision procedures.”¹ (Haidt & Kesebir; 2009; page 3)

While looking at the implicit support Haidt and Kesebir give to virtue ethics approaches to moral education we should also note what they have to say of approaches which still dominate many efforts at moral education:

“Most importantly, deontologists and consequentialists have both shrunk the scope of ethical inquiry from the virtue ethicist’s question of “whom should I become?” down to the narrower question of “what is the right thing to do?” The philosopher Edmund Pincoffs (1986) documents and laments this turn to what he calls “quandary ethics.” He says that modern textbooks present ethics as a set of tools for resolving dilemmas, which encourages explicit rule-based thinking.”²

It is worth pausing here to emphasise also the widespread agreement amongst moral and political philosophers about two related things that politicians over many year have demonstrated that they do not, or choose not to, accept - these being the extent of widespread moral disagreement at really fundamental levels, and the mistake of regarding the people of a modern democratic nation as in any sense a single community. John Rawls, widely regarded as the greatest political philosopher of the twentieth century puts it thus:

“I believe that a democratic society is not and cannot be a community, where by a community I mean a body of persons united in affirming the same comprehensive, or partially comprehensive, doctrine. The fact of reasonable pluralism which characterizes a society with free institutions makes this impossible. This is the fact of profound and irreconcilable differences in citizens’ reasonable comprehensive religious and philosophical conceptions of the world, and in their views of the moral and aesthetic values to be sought in human life.”³

Alasdair MacIntyre sees the attribution of community to the citizens of a modern nation state to be more serious than a simple error:

“The shared public goods of the modern nation-state are not the common goods of a genuine nationwide community and, when the nation-state masquerades as the guardian of a common good, the outcome is bound to be either ludicrous or disastrous or both. For the counterpart to the nation state thus misconceived as itself a community is a misconception of its citizens as constituting a *Volk*, a type of collectivity whose bonds are simultaneously to extend to the entire body of citizens and yet to be as binding as the ties of kinship and locality. In a modern, large scale nation-state no such collectivity is possible and the pretense that it is is always an ideological disguise for sinister realities.”⁴

¹ *Morality*; page 3; Jonathan Haidt & Selin Kesebir; University of Virginia; March 21, 2009: Final draft, submitted for copyediting; in press: *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 5th Edition S. T. Fiske & D. Gilbert (Eds.)

² Haidt & Kesebir, page 4

³ *Justice as Fairness - A Restatement*; John Rawls; 2001; page 3

⁴ *Dependent Rational Animals*; Alasdair MacIntyre; 2009; page 132

‘Spiritual’ and ‘moral’ in schools:- a great beginning but no follow-through

Following the Education (Schools) Act 1992, the new Ofsted inspection arrangements got off the ground and Professor Stewart R. Sutherland, who had been a professor of the History and Philosophy of Religion at King’s College, London, before being appointed first Vice-Principal and then Principal at the college, was appointed Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI) of schools and the first head of Ofsted. Shortly after his appointment, Geoff Teece, then head of the Westhill RE Centre, pulled off something of a coup in persuading Sutherland to come and talk to a meeting of headteachers and RE advisers about how he saw ‘spiritual and moral’ being interpreted by Ofsted. The reaction of a full audience to Stewart Sutherland’s presentation is accurately reflected in a report on the proceedings published by Westhill College, it says:

“It is not possible to capture, in a written text, the interest in and enthusiasm for what Professor Sutherland, HM Chief Inspector, said in his keynote address, nor the positive atmosphere he engendered.”

Many of us who attended that day had been hostile to the notion of a government requirement on schools to promote spiritual and moral development and skeptical that Ofsted would be able to inspect it effectively. Stewart Sutherland made it clear that he was well aware of the difficulties but pointed a way forward that looked like it could take account of most objections and be suitably sensitive and nuanced. He subsequently produced a resume of comments concerning the nature of the spiritual which was published in the report of the proceedings of the meeting and that is reprinted here as an appendix 11 to this report. Many of us present at the event went home happy that not only did we have nothing to fear from the inspection of the spiritual and moral, but that a new concentration on these aspects of education by schools could be explained and justified to teachers as something that would enhance school life and, in time, the life of the nation. More needs to be said about Sutherland’s proposals, and they will be shortly. Sadly, little more than a year after the Westhill event, Stewart Sutherland had left the post of HMCI to become Vice-Chancellor of Edinburgh University, and his successors in the post of HMCI lacked his particular expertise in this area and probably his willingness to engage with it seriously.

Schools, and SCAA, struggle with spiritual and moral

When, in the autumn of 1993, the Ofsted inspections began, schools had little to guide them in this area, but by September 1995 there was a ‘SCAA Discussion Paper’, on, ‘Spiritual and moral development’. This quite brief document demonstrated the inevitable problems involved in giving schools advice on this subject, and the way in which all subsequent official efforts to define the crucial terms of the discussion would fail. The SCAA document acknowledges that spiritual development generally, for many people, is a concept ineluctably bound up with religion. Then it is made clear that such an understanding cannot be pressed on students who have no religious commitment, or indeed by teachers who have no religious commitment. So the authors take refuge in the bland and the fuzzy. We are told that spiritual development has these aspects:

“Beliefs ...; A sense of awe , wonder and mystery...; Experiencing feelings of transcendence...; Search for meaning and purpose...; Self-knowledge...; Relationships...; Creativity...; Feelings and emotions.... “

Whilst there are a number of problems with this list, the obvious issue for teachers is that they generally take the view that everything on the list is already well provided for either by certain curriculum areas or school life more generally, and therefore they come to the conclusion that there is not much more for them to do in the area of spiritual development.

As regards moral development, the 1993 SCAA document says:

“like spiritual development, cannot be defined by one simple statement. It involves several elements.

And then goes on to insist that it includes:

“The will to behave morally as a point of principle ...This attitude is fundamental to moral development.

“Knowledge of the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society - both non-statutory and those prescribed by law.

“Knowledge and understanding of the criteria put forward as a basis for making responsible judgements on moral issues.

“The ability to make judgements on moral issues - as they arise by applying moral principles, insights and reasoning.”

Of these statements the first item is probably relatively non-controversial, the others are each, to some extent, problematic. Part of what defines some people as being morally exemplary is their willingness to challenge, on the grounds of morality, the codes and conventions of conduct currently agreed by their societies¹. Knowledge and understanding of the criteria put forward as a basis for deciding moral issues may well be reasonably taken to be an outcome of success in a course on moral philosophy, but there is no necessary connection between such understanding and a proclivity to behave morally. The last element mentioned would be criticised by some for over-emphasising the rational aspects of morality, as we shall shortly see.

In spite of the problems, many schools sought to write and implement policies in this area. In one large comprehensive school in West London an assistant headteacher was given responsibility for developing policy and monitoring implementation. He set up a working group and after two years of meetings and consultations a policy was produced which advised staff that:

“Spiritual development is defined in very broad terms so as to involve concepts of spirituality that are both religious and non-religious. Since we are committed to fostering a sense of community it is important to work to a definition which is inclusive of a range of values held by ... parents, teachers and Governors This sense of community is enhanced by reinforcing the core moral values mentioned in the definition. These reflect again the development of a ---- High School Community with specific traditional values (discipline, respect for the individual, knowing the difference between right and wrong, the importance of hard work, excellence of achievement). The extent to which both our statements on spiritual and moral development are shared and understood by all should be reflected in the school's success as a harmonious community.”²

The document then goes on to give a definition of moral development:

“Moral development is fundamental to school life. Education never has been and can not be value free. It is important that children understand the differences between right and wrong. Whilst we recognise that every individual will develop his or her own set of values, we believe that the vast majority of teachers and pupils can, and do, subscribe to core values which affirm truth and honesty, kindness and consideration for others, politeness, consideration for property and respect for the rights of the individual within a community. They need to be expressed explicitly and observed in practice in the daily life of the school.”

Having produced this policy in 1998, launched it at a teachers’ training day, and tried hard to encourage departments and teachers to take it seriously, the school undertook a monitoring exercise in 2002, when each department had to specify what it was doing with each year group to promote the spiritual and moral. Further, two senior managers interviewed all departmental heads and other managers as to how they were promoting the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The outcome of the evaluation exercise demonstrated that next to nothing was being done that would not have been done without any specific requirement to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development . Only one department - RE - had produced a specific departmental policy for SMSCD,

“However, many Departments, Houses, and other relevant areas, such as Social Inclusion, felt that SMSC, or an aspect of it, was clearly a major part of their curriculum / specification”

“Within the House system, it was felt that many policies reinforce SMSC, e.g. Bullying Policy, Code of Conduct in the Contact Book.”³

The point being made here is that this school, and its senior management, were outstanding in the seriousness with which they took a new statutory requirement, and the resources they devoted to trying to make sense of it and then to promote it within the school: an effort that was sustained for four years. At the end of the time the assistant headteacher who led the initiative was forced to admit

¹ This point is developed at some length by the moral philosopher William J Talbott in his *Which Rights Should Be Universal?* 2005

² The school referred to was a Grant Maintained School where an assistant headteacher informally asked for my advice at various points of the exercise - I still have original documentation from which I quote: Roger Butler

³ Quotations taken from a report on the evaluation exercise written by an assistant Headteacher at the school

that next to nothing worthwhile had been achieved that would not have been achieved without the SMSC initiative.

What should also be noted is the embrace of the apparently contradictory positions that whilst “every individual will develop his or her own set of values” it nonetheless makes sense to state that there are ‘core values’ on the basis of which it is possible to teach all students in the school “the differences between right and wrong.” It may be possible to argue this, and I shall try shortly to point to what seem to me two promising approaches, which may gain strength by being adopted in tandem, but this is certainly not something that can simply be assumed as a matter of ‘common sense’. And it needs to be stated here that something that simply will not do is the statement of values by the “National Forum for Values in Education and the Community” which was put together by SCAA in 1996 and has continued to be used by successor bodies. Although this document was the work of a group of 150 persons representing a wide cross-section of British society, and in spite of the claim that an opinion polling exercise confirmed that the values it affirms are widely acceptable, the reality is that the document is next to worthless. This is because of two flaws:

1. Agreement was clearly reached by egregiously failing to define numerous contested terms, e.g. ‘family,’ which, for example, if taken to include sexual partnerships other than heterosexual marriage could not have enjoyed the support of many religious people, whilst if excluding unmarried partnerships (and now civil partnerships) would have been widely unacceptable to the teaching profession, if only because approaching half of children now in schools were born to unmarried mothers¹.
2. For every value asserted by the statement, a number of supposed implications of the value are also asserted, but often the implications appear to be non sequiturs. Here many examples could be cited but to take just one, where the logic is obfuscated not only by the non sequitur but also by dubious grammar and a failure to define terms:

“We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development. On the basis of these values, we should ...clarify the meaning and purpose in our lives and decide, on the basis of this, how we believe that our lives should be lived ”

Experiences of the inspection of pupils’ spiritual and moral development

Because there is no suggestion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development becoming statutory in FE, there is no imminent danger of them being inspected within FE. Therefore these comments about the inspection of SMSC in schools are intended to serve only to explore further the intrinsic difficulties of dealing with these areas in secular institutions.

Having been approved as a ‘team member’ for Ofsted inspections in the summer of 1993, between then and 2005 I probably participated in somewhere close to a hundred school inspections, taking the lead in the inspection of SMSC on roughly 90% of the inspections I participated in. Also, during that time, I was consulted by numerous headteachers in the London borough where I worked as to how best they should prepare for an inspection into their provision for students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. What follows is certainly one person’s perspective, but I know that aspects of it will sound familiar to many colleagues in the worlds of schools, inspections and RE advisory work.

Because SMSC was an aspect of schools’ work that was meant to be developed across all areas of the curriculum there was a fiction that it would be inspected by all inspectors within their specialist areas. Therefore the inspector designated to take the lead had the jobs of gathering evidence from all colleagues, leading a discussion at a meeting, and drafting paragraphs for the final inspection report. The way evidence was generally gathered from colleagues was that early in the inspection one circulated a pro forma asking for a number from 1 to 5 to be registered for each of the spiritual, the moral, the social, and the cultural development of students within designated areas of school life. One always left plenty of space for comments. Generally these pro formas were completed during meetings or over lunch and typically colleagues gave their subject areas ‘3’ across the board to indicate that provision was satisfactory. Rarely was any evidence proffered to support the judgement. Then at a meeting one would say to the assembled inspectors that the overall view seemed to be that

¹ According to the Office for National Statistics in 2008 45% of children were born to unmarried mothers

the school was satisfactory in these areas, but some information to support that judgement would be appreciated. Often whoever was looking at matters like behaviour would mention something like a student consultation on the schools' new behaviour policy and this might lead to a suggestion that the grade for 'moral' should be elevated from 'satisfactory' to 'good'. Another colleague might comment that the weakness of a multicultural dimension to the art programme might argue that the grade for 'cultural' should be lowered from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. The RE inspector might then point out that the failure to meet statutory requirements in terms of RE and collective worship made it necessary to judge spiritual development unsatisfactory. By such manoeuvres grades were arrived at and the inspector leading on SMSC would draft paragraphs that matched the agreed grades.

For some time a failure to meet statutory requirements had unexpected and unwelcome consequences for schools and their headteachers in that they were then marked down in terms of the quality of the school's curriculum and that had a knock-on effect of lowering their grade for leadership and management. However, I remember a school with no general RE in key stage 4, and no collective worship, where a registered inspector, intent on finding this school, and particularly its headteacher, excellent in all things, judged on the basis, allegedly, of the school's extra-curricular provision for sports, art and music, that the quality of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision meant that effectively the school was delivering RE and CW and this allowed us to confirm that all statutory requirements were met. If this argument seems bizarre, or even incomprehensible, then that is because it is both. When I followed up my initial protest in a meeting with a further written objection I received the reply, "Objection noted but over-ruled, there is a bigger picture here!" I relate this anecdote as simply the most egregious demonstration I came across of what was very commonly held to be the case, that inspecting SMSCD was a minor and unfortunate technicality that must not be allowed to get in the way of the fundamental business of the inspection.

Perhaps most tellingly of all, I was once asked to come to a primary school staff meeting to speak about SMSC. This was not unusual and I had a standard presentation with modifications for primary, secondary, and special schools. At the beginning of the staff meeting the headteacher, whom I knew reasonably well and had always had a good relationship with, introduced me and then said something to the effect, "We have an inspection in six weeks time and there is much to do so we have no time for longwinded explanations of for getting into groups to discuss anything, what we want is for you to tell us simply and specifically what we need to do to persuade inspectors that we are good at SMSC." I am not sure whether I should feel badly because I was able to put my presentation to one side and make a string of suggestions for immediate action that would lay a trail of evidence that a grateful inspector could be pointed towards. The school was indeed awarded a 'good' for SMSC which was, I suspect, two grades above what it would have got had I been inspecting.

I know that my experiences were similar to those of many others as this topic was sometimes discussed at the termly regional meetings of AREIAC¹. A particular colleague told of how he had made a presentation on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to a primary school staff meeting and been listened to apparently reasonably respectfully and with some interest. However, before leaving the school he went to a men's toilet separated by only a thin wall from the women's toilet from where there were coming peals of laughter as the notions of 'awe' and 'wonder' were being mocked. This certainly illustrates a particular problem that now exists with the word 'spiritual': it no longer features in the lexicon of many people, and among those people who do sometimes use the word the use varies across a wide range of meanings, some of which are mutually incompatible.

¹ AREIAC = The Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants

Appendix 10 Is an intelligible, workable consensus concerning 'spiritual and moral' now possible?

It seems that the crux of the problems we have with defining, and with any effort to promote the spiritual and moral in our schools is pointed to by Stewart Sutherland's remark¹ that:

"The account which we give of spiritual development will, in the end, have to do with our understanding of what it is for a human being to flourish. One's view of the spiritual development of pupils will, in the end, be based upon one's view of what human beings are and what they might be."

Two further things to be noticed from Sutherland's resumé of his talk are that he saw the spiritual and moral as inextricably linked, he refers to "moral depth which is grounded in a sense of the ultimately important", and he asserts that it is a mistake to try to describe all human capacities that can be developed and nurtured as 'skills'.

In exploring how we may arrive at a consensus on the definition and use of our two problematic concepts in the context of state maintained schools and colleges, I want to deal with each separately. Here I want to take the moral ahead of the spiritual, largely because I am a lot more confident of a way forward in relation to moral education than with spiritual education.

Moral development

To return briefly to Elisabeth Anscombe² and her insistence that we cannot progress a philosophy of ethics without an adequate philosophy of psychology: she explains her problem in two disparate paragraphs of her paper.

"In present-day philosophy an explanation is required how an unjust man is a bad man, or an unjust action a bad one; to give such an explanation belongs to ethics; but it cannot even be begun until we are equipped with a sound philosophy of psychology. For the proof that an unjust man is a bad man would require a positive account of justice as a "virtue." This part of the subject-matter of ethics, is however, completely closed to us until we have an account of what type of characteristic a virtue is—a problem, not of ethics, but of conceptual analysis—and how it relates to the actions in which it is instanced: a matter which I think Aristotle did not succeed in really making clear. For this we certainly need an account at least of what a human action is at all, and how its description as "doing such-and-such" is affected by its motive and by the intention or intentions in it; and for this an account of such concepts is required." (page 2)

"[I]s it not clear that there are several concepts that need investigating simply as part of the philosophy of psychology ...to begin with: "action," "intention," "pleasure," "wanting." More will probably turn up if we start with these. Eventually it might be possible to advance to considering the concept "virtue"; with which, I suppose, we should be beginning some sort of a study of ethics." (page 10)

In turning to matters of psychology I am venturing on very risky ground. Whilst I might describe myself as reasonably well-versed, for a non-specialist, in moral philosophy, when it comes to psychology I am really not past the stage of reading books from the popular science shelves of bookshops. However, it has to be said that we are extraordinarily lucky in that some of the leading academic researchers in neuroscience, evolutionary psychology (a reincarnation of sociobiology) and related fields have taken to writing popular accounts of their work. Amongst these writers Antonio Damasio is outstanding, but E.O. Wilson, Joseph Ledoux, Paul Ekman, Mark Hauser, George Lakoff and Guy Claxton are among writers who have helped me develop my thinking in this area. In putting together my thoughts about the sources and nature of morality, however, no-one has been more helpful than Jonathan Haidt, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia who charitably makes much of his work freely available on his university website (<http://people.virginia.edu/~jdh6n/>). So, with my caveats in mind let us look again at the problems of teaching morality in schools.

My generation of teachers, if we took an interest in moral education, very soon found ourselves directed to the work of Lawrence Kohlberg who, on the model of Piaget's teaching about distinct

¹ see appendix 11

² see appendix 9

stages of cognitive development, outlined distinct stages of moral development. Of Kohlberg, Haidt writes:

“Kohlberg is the towering figure in moral psychology who taught or inspired most of the subsequent leading researchers in moral development. In the 1970s and 1980s, progress in moral psychology largely consisted of corrections to Kohlberg’s approach. ... Gilligan (1982) ... argued that Kohlberg’s exclusive focus on justice as the endpoint of moral maturity ignored the possibility of an equally post-conventional “ethic of care,” ... A second correction came from Nucci and Turiel (1978; Turiel, 1983), who demonstrated that children conceptualize the social world in three separate domains – moral, social-conventional, and psychological (or personal)”¹ (page 5)

However, an attempt to undermine the Kohlberg approach came from the sociobiologist E.O. Wilson who in 1975 wrote:

“ethical philosophers intuit the deontological canons of morality by consulting the emotive centers of their own hypothalamic-limbic system. This is also true of the developmentalists, even when they are being their most severely objective. Only by interpreting the activity of the emotive centers as a biological adaptation can the meaning of the canons be deciphered” (quoted by Haidt, page 7).

What was in 1975 a largely speculative claim has since been strongly supported by experimental evidence such that Haidt now confidently concludes:

“moral judgment is caused primarily by moral intuitions, which are defined as “the sudden appearance in consciousness, or at the fringe of consciousness, of an evaluative feeling (like-dislike, good-bad) about the character or actions of a person, without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion” (Haidt & Bjorklund, in press but quoted in Haidt; 2007; page 9).

“people engage in moral reasoning primarily to seek evidence in support of their initial intuition, and also to resolve those rare but difficult cases when multiple intuitions conflict.” (Haidt; 2007; page 9)

Jon Haidt’s own thesis about morality he terms the ‘social intuition model’ which he built on top of what he terms “Moral Foundations Theory”. His website describes each in these terms:

“Moral reasoning does affect judgment, but this happens primarily in between people, as they talk, gossip, and argue (hence the “social” part of the model)”

[T]he [moral foundations] theory proposes that five innate and universally available psychological systems are the foundations of “intuitive ethics.” Each culture then constructs virtues, narratives, and institutions on top of these foundations, thereby creating the unique moralities we see around the world, and conflicting within nations too. The foundations are:

1. Harm/care, related to our long evolution as mammals with attachment systems and an ability to feel (and dislike) the pain of others. This foundation underlies virtues of kindness, gentleness, and nurturance.
2. Fairness/reciprocity, related to the evolutionary process of reciprocal altruism. This foundation generates ideas of justice, rights, and autonomy.
3. Ingroup/loyalty, related to our long history as tribal creatures able to form shifting coalitions. This foundation underlies virtues of patriotism and self-sacrifice for the group. It is active anytime people feel that it's "one for all, and all for one."
4. Authority/respect, shaped by our long primate history of hierarchical social interactions. This foundation underlies virtues of leadership and followership, including deference to legitimate authority and respect for traditions.
5. Purity/sanctity, shaped by the psychology of disgust and contamination. This foundation underlies religious notions of striving to live in an elevated, less carnal, more noble way. It underlies the widespread idea that the body is a temple which can be desecrated by immoral activities and contaminants (an idea not unique to religious traditions)."

Haidt explains that western liberals tend to build their morality only on the first two foundations and this is a cause of misunderstandings and failures of communication with religious groups and more

¹ This, and other quotations from Haidt (unless another source is specified) are from a paper entitled *Morality* and published in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*; Volume 3, Issue 1, Jan 2008, pages 65 - 72. However, I do not have access to the journal and so my quotations and page numbers refer to an earlier version of the paper available on Jon Haidt’s university webpage and dated August 31, 2007

conservative thinkers. Haidt expands on this with reference to the work of the sociologist Christian Smith who

“argues that humans are moral, believing, narrating animals...[who] need to live in a moral order that is created by shared stories and that gives us beliefs about who we are, what we ought to do, and what is sacred.” (Haidt; 2007; page 2)

Quoting Smith, Haidt sets out the two dominant meta-narratives of our world, the first of which is favoured in the academy, in industry and among educated westerners more widely; the second continues to have supporters among educated westerners, particularly those who are religious, but is more dominant in traditional societies, or societies where old traditions have only recently been displaced or challenged:

“Once upon a time, the vast majority of human persons suffered in societies and social institutions that were unjust, unhealthy, repressive, and oppressive. These traditional societies were reprehensible because of their deep-rooted inequality, exploitation, and irrational traditionalism... But the noble human aspiration for autonomy, equality, and prosperity struggled mightily against the forces of misery and oppression, and eventually succeeded in establishing modern, liberal, democratic, capitalist, welfare societies. While modern social conditions hold the potential to maximize the individual freedom and pleasure of all, there is much work to be done to dismantle the powerful vestiges of inequality, exploitation, and repression.” (Haidt; 2007; page 3)

“Once upon a time, folk lived together in local, face to face communities where we knew and took care of each other... life was securely woven in homespun fabrics of organic, integrated culture, faith, and tradition.... But then a dreadful thing happened: Folk community was overrun by the barbarisms of modern industry, urbanization, rationality, science, fragmentation, anonymity... Faith began to erode, social trust dissipate, folk customs vanish.... All that remains today are tattered vestiges of a world we have lost. The task of those who see clearly now is to memorialize and celebrate folk community, mourn its ruin, and resist and denounce the depravities of modern, scientific rationalism that would kill the Human Spirit. (Haidt; 2007; page 3)

Haidt believes that a useful and fair definition of morality must encompass the worldviews and concerns of the upholders of both meta-narratives and he and Kesebir offer:

“Moral systems are interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, technologies, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible”

and commend their definition on the grounds that:

“This functionalist approach allows psychology to move from moral parochialism (i.e., the belief that there is one universal moral domain that happens to include the values most prized by the secular academics who defined the domain) to moral pluralism (i.e., the belief that there are multiple incompatible but morally defensible ways of organizing a society)”¹

Having quoted Haidt at length it is important to emphasise how he is only one, albeit a very important, representative of an approach that is coming to dominate moral psychology, an approach apparently little known or discussed within British philosophical or educational circles. Marc Hauser, author of *Moral Minds* (2006) is an evolutionary psychologist and biologist at Harvard where he is Professor of Psychology and Program in Neurosciences, and Director of the Primate Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory. Hauser makes a point of his areas of disagreement with Haidt, but they are trivial compared to the differences between the two of them on the one hand, and the tradition that derives from Kohlberg on the other. Hauser sets out his position on morality at the beginning of the prologue to his 539 page book thus:

“[W]e evolved a moral instinct, a capacity that naturally grows with each child, designed to generate rapid judgements about what is morally right or wrong based on an unconscious grammar of action ... our moral faculty is equipped with a *universal moral grammar*, a toolkit for building specific moral systems. Once we have acquired our culture’s specific moral norms - a process that is more like growing a limb than sitting in Sunday school and learning about vices and virtues - we judge whether actions are permissible, obligatory, or forbidden without conscious reasoning and without explicit access to the underlying principles.” (Moral Minds xv-xvi).

¹ Haidt & Kesebir, 2009, page 7

And whilst social psychologists and neurologists have important new insights to offer any account of morality, they are by no means alone in insisting that our dependence on the likes of Kant, Mill, and Kohlberg needs to be rethought:

“In the years since 2001, morality has become one of the major interdisciplinary topics of research in the academy. Three of the fields most active in this integration are social psychology, social-cognitive neuroscience, and evolutionary science, but many other scholars are joining in, including anthropologists (Boehm, in press; A. P. Fiske, 2004; N. Henrich & J. Henrich, 2007), cognitive scientists (Casebeer, 2003; Lakoff, 2008), developmental psychologists (Bloom, 2004), economists (Clark, 2007; Gintis, Bowles, Boyd, & Fehr, 2005; Fehr & Gächter, 2002), historians (McNeil, 1995; Smail, 2008); legal theorists (Kahan, 2005; Robinson, Kurzban, & Jones, 2007; Sunstein, 2005), and philosophers (Appiah, 2008; Caruthers, Laurence, & Stich, 2006; Joyce, 2006).”¹

Fleshing out what might be done in schools - thick and thin moral codes

Having set out, undoubtedly inadequately, something of the tenor of an important current in modern academic debate about morality, I wish to suggest that it may help us with the pressing questions about what sort of moral education might be appropriate in English maintained schools. In doing this I will draw on a distinction originally made by the political philosopher Michael Walzer but explained thus by Richard Rorty:

“Walzer's contrast between thick and thin morality is, among other things, a contrast between the detailed and concrete stories you can tell about yourself as a member of a smaller group and the relatively abstract and sketchy story you can tell about yourself as a citizen of the world. You know more about your family than about your village, more about your village than about your nation, more about your nation than about humanity as a whole, more about being human than about simply being a living creature. You are in a better position to decide what differences between individuals are morally relevant when dealing with those whom you can describe thickly, and in a worse position when dealing with those whom you can only describe thinly.” (*Philosophy as cultural politics*; Richard Rorty, page 46)

Briefly my suggestion is that every school or college is a community that can and should develop and promote a thick moral code in relation to things related to the education it provides, and its immediate social world. The school then should tentatively also promote a much thinner moral code in relation to students' values and behaviour in the wider world. However, in addition to, and separately from, the morality the school promotes, it should continue to insist that students explore and consider a range of visions of the good as set out in a representative range of religious and political 'comprehensive moral doctrines'² and help them develop the mental apparatus to understand the moral seriousness and attractiveness to their adherents of each.

The thick moral code

To advocate that schools or colleges should develop their own thick moral codes implies that it is not for me, or indeed anyone outside the school community, to do this job for them. However, to give an idea of the sort of thing I have in mind my own contribution to such a discussion within a school might begin with suggestions such as:

- Schools and colleges exist to promote learning therefore anything that promotes learning or the capacity to learn is good and anything that detracts from these is bad.
- Academic learning is fundamentally a process of enquiry leading to understanding and the learning that best leads to understanding requires a willingness to work cooperatively and collaboratively. Students need to demonstrate active concern for the learning of their classmates and the whole school community.
- All students and staff must contribute to an atmosphere where questions and discussion are welcomed and taken seriously. This means that students must learn to attend carefully to

¹ Haidt; 2009; page 9

² This is an expression used by John Rawls and other philosophers to which we shall return shortly

classmates as well as teachers and treat questions and contributions in learning situations respectfully and charitably¹.

- Teachers must be respected as sources of authority in the subjects they teach but teachers in turn must understand that it is their duty to model best practice in learning by being willing to be questioned, to give rational explanations when asked, and to be quick to acknowledge when they have either made a mistake or a student has a superior argument.
- Books and other equipment necessary for learning are treated with the utmost respect
- Any form of bullying or harassment detracts from individuals' capacity to concentrate fully on their studies and must not be permitted
- A school or college community should seek to be a good neighbour and therefore contribute to the public good within the neighbourhood where it is located. This might take the form of involvement in different forms of social action such as organising concerts or drama presentations, charitable giving or spending time on environmental or social work projects.

The thin moral code

Here, it is first to be expected that a school's thick moral code, which must be justified wholly in terms of its derivation from the values and situation of a particular learning community, will have some spillover into the students' attitudes towards people, relationships, and productive activity generally. But then how can one build a wider morality in a situation where some students themselves, and certainly their families, will have a wide variety of comprehensive moral doctrines? John Rawls, looking for an agreement as to a meaning of justice on which modern liberal democracies could ground their political institutions came up with the idea of an overlapping moral consensus. Rawls believed that people with widely different worldviews, both religious and secular, would be able to find sufficient commonalities from within their respective traditions to come to agreement on the nature of justice, which Rawls saw as the prime political virtue necessary for the rational construction of a democratic political system. Martha Nussbaum, a prominent American philosopher and sometime student of Rawls has extended the applicability of the idea of the overlapping moral consensus in two ways. First, she believes that we can say enough about human nature to sketch out the minimum conditions for any feasible account of what might count as a flourishing human life, and on this basis gain, over time, the assent not just of members of advanced liberal democracies (which is all Rawls aspired to in the end) but of people of all religions and cultures to a list of capabilities that should be extended to all human beings on the basis that without any one of the specified capabilities a truly flourishing human life is just not possible:

“[T]he notion of human nature in my theory is explicitly and from the start evaluative, and, in particular, ethically evaluative: among the many actual features of a characteristic human form of life, we select some that seem so normatively fundamental that a life without any possibility at all of exercising one of them, at any level, is not a fully human life, a life worthy of human dignity.” (Frontiers of Justice; Martha Nussbaum; 2006, page 181)

Secondly, whilst Nussbaum, like Rawls, is looking merely to provide a foundation on which a modern pluralist society can be built, she offers a clearer picture of the the sorts of life made possible by such a society. It is important to emphasise that Nussbaum insists that she is not offering a comprehensive moral doctrine but setting out fundamental capabilities² that all people need to have to enable them to live with dignity within any comprehensive moral doctrine. She is clear that the list of ten capabilities she offers is provisional and will “undergo further modification in the light of criticism”. It is also important that it is recognised that whilst one must have the possibility of utilising each of the capabilities, no-one may be required to make use of any one of them, so for example Nussbaum has on her list,

1 In the sense of interpreting a speaker's statements to be rational and attributing to any utterance its best, strongest possible interpretation

2 The so-called ‘capabilities approach’ derives from Amartya Sen, a nobel prizewinning economist who pointed out that measuring countries on the basis of their GNP tells us nothing about the wealth and welfare of individuals living within each country. He suggested people realistically measure their wellbeing in terms of what they are able to do in their lives, their ‘capabilities’. Martha Nussbaum is a sometime collaborator with Sen.

“Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.”

However, Nussbaum wholly accepts that there will be religious groups, like the Amish¹, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Bahá’ís², who will not wish to avail themselves of this capability - or all aspects of it. She does however believe that even religious groups that themselves do not want to participate in political action could be persuaded to agree that it is good for people generally to have this right. Nussbaum’s full list of capabilities is reproduced from her book, *Frontiers of Justice*, at the end of this appendix.

My suggestion here is that a programme of widely acceptable, but thin, moral education could be built around the capabilities approach provided it is accepted that some students may not be convinced that elements of it do in fact fit with their own comprehensive moral doctrine: giving space for such disagreements to be explored in schools and colleges would itself be morally educative.

And the How? of moral education

Jonathan Haidt is clear that Aristotle had it right. People become moral initially by being encouraged to behave morally and this is done partly through stories that glorify virtues such as compassion and self-sacrifice and through rules that require the practice of such virtues as courtesy and consideration for others. Haidt and Hauser agree that children are born prepared to be moral but they need an environment that allows and encourages that potentiality to develop. And Haidt certainly does not discount the usefulness, alongside the promotion of relevant virtues, of rational discussion of moral issues. He clarifies his position on this thus:

“The modal view in moral psychology nowadays is that reasoning and intuition both matter, but that intuition matters more. This is not a normative claim (for even a little bit of good reasoning can save the world from disaster); it is a descriptive one. It is the claim that automatic, intuitive processes happen more quickly and frequently than moral reasoning, and when moral intuitions occur, they alter and guide the ways in which we subsequently (and only sometimes) deliberate. Those deliberations can—but rarely do—overturn one’s initial intuitive response.” (Haidt & Kesebir; 2009; page 18)

On morality I will close with the conclusion of a paper co-authored by Jesse Graham, Jonathan Haidt and Sara E. Rimm-Kaufman³:

“Philosophers have been debating the normative grounding of moral truths for millennia, and it seems unlikely that ideologically-opposed moral educators will reach a final normative agreement anytime soon. However, we see the empirical questions as much more tractable: what educational practices are effective for the specific aims advocated by each side? What programs foster compassion and fairness, and which lead to cohesive moral communities? Do practices aimed toward individual morality always interfere with group-level goals, or are there conditions under which both can be attained? Precisely when and how can moral training in group-focused morality have adverse effects on individual-focused morality, and vice-versa?

“Moral psychology and education science can answer these questions without staking a normative claim on one side or the other. It is likely that such empirical work will enrich and inform normative conclusions about morality; we see much more cause for hope in this process, rather than one in which normative conclusions determine the empirical questions (and answers). Moral educators in turn can make use of the ideological division by confronting it directly: the age-old debate about which virtues we want our children to embody should itself become part of moral education. Further moral education integration will require confronting the inevitability of moral disagreements, and acknowledging the limitations of both sides. Wrestling with the contradictions inherent in a five-foundation morality can be a moral education in itself, even if a final normative resolution is never reached.”

¹ Nussbaum’s own example

² Two further examples that have occurred to me

³ *Ideology and Intuition in Moral Education*: published in the European Journal of Developmental Science 2008, Vol 2, No 3 pp 269 to 286

Spiritual development

One evening after school in the late 1980s, RE teachers working in the ILEA gathered to hear one of their number talk to them about 'spiritual' education. The talk was thoroughly well prepared, and well presented. The problem however was that many in the audience lost the speaker's train of reasoning about five minutes into the talk when he offered his suggestion for a definition of spirituality he proposed we should all adopt for educational settings. The teacher was Kevin Mott Thornton, then of Mulberry School for Girls, and his definition for school spirituality was

"that quality of being, holistically conceived, made up of insight, beliefs, values, attitudes/emotions and behavioural dispositions, which both informs and may be informed by lived experience"

The definition suffers from at least one of the four faults that definitions of spirituality for education seem regularly to display. They are:

- a) incomprehensible;
- b) comprehensible but unclear as to classroom implications;
- c) comprehensible and with clear classroom implications which evacuate the concept of everything that distinguishes it from being an aspect of secular self-development;
- d) or comprehensible, with clear classroom implications, but only applicable to a faith based establishment

There is no doubt that many of the supporters of the 1944 Education Act saw themselves as wanting to promote, in some sense, Britain as a Christian country. An MP named Sir P Hannon speaking in a parliamentary debate on the bill cited an article by the Dean of Winchester:

"He contends—and with this the whole Catholic community of this country cordially agrees—that education is a spiritual activity depending far more on personal than on administrative factors...In a Christian country, for example, the purpose and end of education cannot be conceived as anything less than such a development of the child's whole personality as will inspire him with the desire to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever. That is the conception of education which the Dean of Winchester and, I hope, the whole Christian body of the country entertains in regard to the personality of the child."

Whilst we could not, and I would not want to, endorse the sentiment of Sir P. Hannon, it does seem to me that nothing is to be gained, and the English language suffers, if we evacuate the word spiritual of any sense of the numinous or of the possibility of a life lived with some values other than conspicuous consumption. Fr John Lee, of the Russian Orthodox Church, speaking once to ILEA RE teachers, said that Orthodox Christians are reluctant to give a number to the sacraments because, "Whilst we may know where God is, we must never suggest there is anywhere he isn't." This may give some justification to the claim of numerous headteachers that spiritual development, whilst not planned, happens in all areas of the life of their schools. However, I would see the proper school provision of spiritual development to come (in part, but important part) through enthusing students in the study of art, poetry, literature, music, dance, and drama and in all of those finding some space for exploring their religious manifestations and the motivations of those inspired to create or perform for religious reasons. In religious education, space needs to be found for a serious look at mysticism, at Hasidism and Sufism, and at the lives of contemporary religious, certainly within Christian traditions (e.g. Franciscan and Benedictine) but also within Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions. Can there be secular spirituality? Richard Rorty claimed to find it in the writing of the contemporary novelist Dorothy Allison who, in an essay entitled 'Believing in Literature' wrote:

"[L]iterature, and my own dream of writing, has shaped my own system of belief - a kind of atheist's religion ... the backbone of my convictions has been a belief in the progress of human society as demonstrated in its fiction ... There is a place where we are always alone with our own mortality, where we must simply have something greater than ourselves to hold onto - God or history or politics or literature or a belief in the healing power of love, or even righteous anger. Sometimes I think they are all the same. A reason to believe, a way to take the world by the throat and insist that there is more to this life than we have ever imagined." (Philosophy and social hope; Richard Rorty; 1999, page 161)

In essence, it seems to me that spirituality has the nature of an undertaking, a hopeful search for something unknown. There are many paths the following of which have been productive of spiritual development. Those who have travelled such paths assure us that on each a person may encounter one or more individual who may be recognised as having a gift for helping others on the same

journey. But very few teachers are qualified or able to function as spiritual directors, and maintained schools, especially those without specific religious commitments, are inappropriate places for teachers to aspire to give spiritual direction. However, schools could do more than they currently do to hold up to students exemplars of the spiritual life in a way that might lead some to want to investigate it further. One way this can be done is by engaging students more deeply with the lives and work of people whose life stories or art speak of their spiritual journey. But the intractable problem here seems to be that very few teachers have any understanding of, or sympathy with, the spiritual quest. A lesser problem is that modern methods of assessment, in seeking objectivity, are likely to result in students being able to pass examinations in the lives of the great saints, mystics and religious artists by rote learning of facts and opinions about their lives and work without ever grappling with their accounts of their motivation, inner-struggles and numinous experiences. This though is a lesser problem here than in other curriculum areas because the stories of the lives of the great holy people of different religious traditions undoubtedly have the power to overcome, for some students at least, the spirit deadening qualities of multiple choice questions and the dreaded GCSE course book.

Martha Nussbaum's list of 'Central Human Capabilities'

"The list itself is open-ended and has undergone modification over time; no doubt it will undergo further modification in the light of criticism. But here is the current version

"The Central Human Capabilities

1. *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as not to be worth living.
2. *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place, to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. *Senses, Imagination and Thought*. Being able to use the senses to imagine, think, and reason - and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain
5. *Emotions*. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be shown to be crucial in their development.)
6. *Practical Reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for the liberty of conscience and religious observance.)
7. *Affiliation*.
 - A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and political speech.)
 - B. Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin.
8. *Other Species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.
9. *Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
10. *Control over One's Environment*.
 - A. *Political*. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. *Material*. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.”

(Nussbaum, 2006, pages 76 - 78)

Appendix 11 Professor Stewart Sutherland's resumé of his keynote address:

Spiritual Development

The central most difficult problem is to give an account of what, in the light of the Education (Schools) Act 1992, is meant by the 'spiritual development' of pupils. Unfortunately, neither this Act nor any of its predecessors from 1944 onwards help answer that question. Nonetheless, it is an urgent matter, for you in the schools must contribute to that development, and we in OFSTED must inspect the provision which you make.

First, four general comments:

1. Spiritual development is not to be equated with, nor to be seen solely as the outcome of, religious education, although they doubtless are more closely related to one another than, in all respects, spiritual development is with other parts of the curriculum. The lesson here is that colleagues should not be allowed to assume that spiritual development, any more than moral or social development, can be left to RE.
2. In many of our schools spiritual development cannot be confined to development in commitment to one specified religious tradition, be it within Christianity, or within Islam, Hinduism or Judaism. That would also over-constrain the issues at stake.
3. The account which we give of spiritual development will, in the end, have to do with our understanding of what it is for a human being to flourish. One's view of the spiritual development of pupils will, in the end, be based upon one's view of what human beings are and what they might be.
4. One related general point is that in most great world religions there are two rather different approaches to giving meaning to the idea of spirituality and spiritual development. One is that spiritual development takes place best within the cloisters of a closed community. The second is that spirituality can be a characteristic or goal of most of us who choose to live in the hurly-burly of ordinary life. There are many variations in between these two, but they do define the spectrum of possibilities. Within the normal school and classroom it is clear that we must look to the latter end of the spectrum.

Now, four specific markers of the location within human life of the spiritual:

1. The first of these is the recognition of human finitude. Edwin Muir, the poet, pointed us towards one central aspect of this in his *Variations on a Theme*: two of the lines will serve to highlight the point:
Time's armies are the seconds, soft as rain
Whose wound's so fine it leaves no scar or stain
Of course, we are all subject to time, and to change through time. That is a central part of our finitude. Equally we are creatures who live in a specific place/space and carry with us all the limitations that brings.
2. However, although these points seem negative in implying our being subject to limits, nonetheless they are equally the basis for all that we know of positive human achievement. Great, good, kind acts all require a particular time and place to happen. Change through time allows the development of a theme in music, or a plot in drama. A great painting is a particular material object in a particular place ... and so on. My suggestion, spelt out in other things which I have written, is that the spiritual perspective on this is to see ourselves, finite, limited by time and space, as nonetheless living *sub-specie aeternitatis*. This, I believe, is what Kierkegaard meant when he spoke of human beings holding together in their lives, in tension, the finite and the infinite.
3. The writer and critic, Frederick Raphael, once wrote, 'the last man who knew everything lived and died in the eighteenth century'. The modern version of this is that we have a ten-subject curriculum. Part of our awareness of finitude, especially today, is an appreciation of the fragmentation of knowledge, and its implications. There are wise and clever people who know a

lot. The difference is that the wise, as distinct from the merely clever, know how much they do not know. In the school classroom and in teaching, there is great opportunity to explore this as part of 'the human condition'. It is also deeply relevant to our concerns about the attitudes which children have to one another.

4. If knowledge is evidently fragmented, so too are many other aspects of human life and its possibilities. One mark of spirituality is the search for integration amongst the pieces and that is ultimately a search for integrity as well as integration. One central sign of spiritual development is the capacity to cope with change and diversity and multiplicity. It is easy, but would be a mistake, to reduce this to a psychological skill. Human psychology is relevant here, but it is not merely a 'skill', it has to do with moral depth which is grounded in a sense of the ultimately important - for expansion of this read some of Tolstoy's short stories!

© Stewart R Sutherland, 1993

Appendix 12 Some information about AFAN

ALL FAITHS AND NONE – FUNDING AND OUTPUTS 2007-9

Background and Funding

The aim of the AFAN project is to set out for young people basic information on the six main faiths and the humanist position to enable them to explore the 'Big Questions' of meaning and purpose in life, and to develop a set of values for life in contemporary society. The Jerusalem Trust contributed initial funding to the development phase of the project in the form of a £20k pa grant for two years to support the overall direction and management of the project by funding the work of the two co-directors: Alan Murray (formerly Churches' National Officer for Further Education) and Professor Andrew Wright (Kings College, London). Main funding for the members of the project team (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Humanist) for Phases 1&2 -of the project (2007-9) has come from the LSC (Learning and Skills Council), with grants of £82K in Year 1, reduced to £41K in Year 2 due to the impending abolition of the LSC. DIUS indicated support for the Phase 3 delivery process through LSIS (an LSC successor body), but this is unlikely to be forthcoming until the 'machinery of FE government' changes consequent on the abolition of LSC and DIUS are completed in 2010. Phase 3 will start with piloting of the programme in up to 50 colleges from September 2009. Up to date information is available from alan@afan.uk.net

OUTPUTS

Phases 1 & 2 have delivered their main outputs – a comprehensive website (www.afan.uk.net), with visuals, weblinks and learner materials on key topics on the main faiths and beliefs in the UK. An initial Teachers' Handbook covering 15 topics (eg God, Judgment and Salvation, Sex and Sexuality, Doing Good and Social Action) has also been published and distributed to pilot colleges. An AFAN DVD, outlining the work of the project in Colleges, has recently been published and will be distributed to principals of all colleges in October 2009. A full report on Phases 1&2 is available, and the outputs have been welcomed by the ten FE colleges where young people have participated in initial piloting in 2009 .

PURPOSE

All Faiths and None is a programme which offers a methodology and resources to help teachers support young people of religious and non-religious backgrounds to develop mutual understanding and to share values by meeting together for dialogue and discussion. AFAN recognises the deep reservoirs of human (and for much of humanity, divine) wisdom contained in the great faiths, in their scriptures and worship traditions. It also draws on the works of the great humanist teachers of the past and present. It acknowledges the diversity of faith and belief in the modern world, but focuses on the common themes which underpin a cohesive society.

AFAN is not a research project, nor a factory for the development of teaching materials. Nor is it a government-inspired conspiracy to domesticate religions into constrained patterns. It is an educational resource to enable young people to explore the questions they pose concerning the meaning and purpose of life and work, through dialogue, and engagement with the domains of mystery and depth – with what transcends everyday material life and can give meaning to concepts such as life and death, love and joy, and can illustrate and illuminate the values and precepts by which we live.

Appendix 13 - Glossary of acronyms and other terms used in this report

AFAN	'All Faiths and None' - a resource and website All Faiths And None AFAN with visuals for 16-19 students and their teachers on the teachings of six of the main faiths and the humanists
AoC	The Association of Colleges - an organisation set up by the English FE colleges to support them in their work
AREIAC	Association of Religious Education Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants'
CEL	Centre for Learning and Excellence: set up to foster and support leadership improvement, reform and transformation throughout the FE sector; now absorbed in LSIS
CES	Catholic Education Service': "The CES negotiates, on behalf of all bishops, with Government, and other national bodies on legal, administrative, and religious education matters." (from CES website)
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Family - the government department with (inter alia) oversight of schools
DfES	Department for Education and Science - name of now defunct government department that used to have oversight of schools
Diploma	Aside from the word's generic meaning it is now being widely used in connection with a new qualification for students aged 14 to 19: there are currently 14 diploma subjects with three more becoming available soon, including one in 'Humanities and Social Sciences' which will have some RE content - see http://yp.direct.gov.uk/diplomas
DIUS	Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills - a now defunct government department that used to have responsibilities in relation to further education
Enrichment	Activities provided for students outside their formal area of study. In some cases these activities contribute to developing useful skills, sometimes they are designed for personal growth, sometimes simply to be interesting and pleasurable.
fbfe	National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education
FBVE	faith, beliefs and values education
FE	Further Education - education that comes after compulsory schooling and, form many students, before university
FIFEF	

Foundation Learning (called the Foundation Learning Tier prior to August 2009)	An initiative to improve the skills of learners working below level 2, aged 14 and over, through developing high-quality credit-based qualifications at Entry level and level 1
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education: a qualification generally taken by school students at the end of year 11 - i.e. At the age of 16, at the end of current compulsory education.
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector': and inspector of educational institutions employed by the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted)
Levels	All UK qualifications are designated at being at a particular level in a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The first 4 levels of which are:
Entry Level	Qualifications leading on to level 1
Level 1	e.g. GCSEs Grades D-G
Level 2	e.g. GCSEs Grades A*-C
Level 3	e.g. A levels
LSC	Learning and Skills Council: LSC is a non-departmental public body which began work in 2001, taking over the roles of the former Further Education Funding Council and Training and Enterprise Councils. It is due to be shut down by 2010 with its functions being taken over by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service: a new body, formed from CEL and QIA, to develop excellent and sustainable FE provision across the sector
NBRIA	'National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers': A Roman Catholic educational organisation that aims to promote sound religious education and formation at all levels, its members are based in the dioceses of England and Wales. NBRIA is a member organisation of the REC.
NEAFE	National Ecumenical Agency Further Education': now defunct, one of the bodies that amalgamated to form the National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education (fbfe)
NOCN	The National Open College Network "the leading credit and unit based Awarding Body in the UK. NOCN provides a national framework of credit-based units and qualifications which are underpinned by a range of national and local services, including curriculum support and staff development." (from page 2 of NOCN General Religious Education Qualification Guide)

NQF	National Qualifications Framework: it sets out the levels against which a qualification can be recognised in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
OFQUAL	Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator': a non-ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, exams and tests in England.
OFSTED	'Office of Standards in Education': a non-ministerial government department with responsibilities for the inspection of educational institutions and children's services
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Agency
QCDA	Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency: a new body that QCA is in the process of becoming - QCA as was, minus regulatory functions that will go to Ofqual
QCF	Qualifications and Curriculum Framework: it specifies what names can be applied to different qualifications (i.e. 'award', 'certificate' or 'diploma') at different levels of the NQF
QIA	Quality Improvement Agency: a defunct body that was absorbed by LSIS
REC	Religious Education Council of England and Wales
SORB	"sexual orientation, race and belief" these being areas where legislation requires measures to ensure non-discrimination, but no statutory duty to promote them such as there is in the case of race, gender and disability equality
"Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" (SMSC)	Education Acts from 1944 on made reference to seeking to promote spiritual and moral values and a 1992 act of Parliament made it a requirement for Ofsted to report annually to the government on "spiritual, moral, social and cultural development" in schools. There is no similar requirement regarding FE colleges, including VI form colleges
Year 11	Students in state schools in the UK currently progress through 11 years of compulsory schooling. Year 11 is the last of these years during which students become 16 years of age
Sixth form college (or VI form college)	A college that takes students, normally at age 16, for 2 or occasionally 3 years of further study prior to them entering, either higher education or the workforce
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
VA	Voluntary Aided'; the status of schools and sixth form colleges mainly funded by the government, but owned and run by voluntary bodies, usually religious bodies. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church are major providers of VA institutions although other religious groups are also involved

Appendix 14 - Documentation consulted in relation to this study

AFAN briefing paper - community cohesion (undated)
A handbook for Teachers, FE Chaplains and Multi Faith Teams (draft); AFAN - All Faiths and None (no date)
Approaching Spiritual and Moral Development in Further Education - some exploratory papers; The Church of England, The Methodist Church; (no date)
Chaplaincy services are not only for religious patients; BMJ article, 11 April 2009; volume 338
Citizenship and employability; Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme; QIA
Citizenship learning through Diplomas; Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme; LSIS' ISBN 978-1-84572-724-6
Citizenship opportunities through foundation, higher and extended projects; LSIS; 2009; ISBN 978-84572-726-0
Directory of FE Chaplaincies and Multi-Faith Student Support; January 2009
Equality and diversity - Introduction to Leadership; CEL & QIA course leaflet
Insight - The Newsletter for St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College; Spring 2009
Journal of Chaplaincy in Further Education; Vol 2 No 2; Autumn 2006
Living spirituality in the workplace - the CEL way; CEL, Jan 2008
Making space for faith: values, beliefs and faiths in the learning and skills sector - a report on the national enquiry into opportunities for spiritual and moral development in further education; NEAFE and FIFEF; July 2007
Welcome to Chaplaincy - A Training Programme for Multi-Faith Chaplaincy in the Further Education Sector; Isc, fbfe; (no date)
Whole people matter; The importance of continuing the spiritual, ethical, social and cultural development of each learner; The Church of England, the Methodist Church, Catholic Education Service, The Free Churches Group, NEAFE, August 2003

Appendix 15 - Bibliography: books and journal articles quoted from or referred to in the report

- Anscombe, G E M. 1958. "Modern Moral Philosophy". *Philosophy* 33: No. 124:14.
- Claxton, Guy. 1998. *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind*. London: 4th Estate.
- Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. 2006; Oxford University Press; Oxford.
- Ekman, Paul. 2003. *Emotions Revealed*. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1977. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1994. *Heidegger's Ways*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Graham, Jesse, Jonathan Haidt, and Sara E Rimm-Kaufman. 2008. *Ideology and Intuition in Moral Education*. *European Journal of Developmental Science* 2:269 - 286.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2006. *The Happiness Hypothesis*. London: William Heinemann.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2007. *Morality*
- Haidt, Jonathan, and Selin Kesebir. 2009. *Morality*. In *The Handbook of Social Psychology, (5th Edition)*, ed. Fiske & Gilbert D.
- Lakoff, George. 2002. *Moral Politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1999. *Philosophy in the Flesh*. New York: Basic Books.
- Ledoux, Joseph. 1998. *The Emotional Brain*. London: Phoenix.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1967. *A Short History of Ethics*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1988. *Whose Justice, Which Rationality*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2007. *After Virtue*. Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2009. *Dependent, Rational Animals*. London: Duckworth.
- Hauser, Marc D. *Moral Minds*,. 2006.. London: Abacus.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 2006. *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*. Cambridge, MA; London, England. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Rawls, John. 2001. *Justice as Fairness - a Restatement*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Rorty, Richard. 1999. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin.
- Rorty, Richard. 2007. *Philosophy as cultural politics*;Cambridge University Press SCAA. *Spiritual and Moral Development - SCAA Discussion Papers: No 3*; SCAA; London
- Talbott, William J. 2005. *Which Rights Should Be Universal*. Oxford University Press. Oxford