

Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education: our work in 2025

“Being present, we will show compassion, speak truth and offer hope”

The work of Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) in 2025 has been broad and varied, offering support, challenge and inspiration, as well as seeking chances for us to learn and grow. This paper shares some of the work we have led and engaged in, supporting the leaders, teachers, staff and volunteers of our schools and trusts to enable the children and young people they serve to flourish.



Pupils from St Osmund's Middle School, Dorchester

So, here is a round-up of the work of the SDBE team in 2025...



In June, the whole team was involved in leading on the Year 6 Leavers' Services and coordinating with colleagues from the Cathedral, the Bishops' offices, and our schools / trusts. We welcomed over 2000 children with staff and volunteers from our CoFE schools to celebrate the transition to their next stage in learning. It was a week of fantastic services making all welcome in their cathedral and supported by our Bishops, Archdeacons, Dean Nick, Rev Ross the cathedral's missionary for young people and the cathedral team.

We supported the recruitment of 43 head teachers and 4 CEOs in 2025, bringing our expertise to bear in support of these vital appointments. We then supported our new head teachers with focused visits. We also worked with Bishop Stephen and Carol to hold new head teacher commissioning events at South Canonry. This support was valued by our newly appointed head teachers, saying it helped them to feel part of the diocesan family.



The team continued to provide support and training for schools around their Christian vision and values, collective worship, RE, relationships education and SIAMS inspections in 2025. This included delivering the Annual Virtual RE Conference for over 60 teachers from across the diocese, and supporting RE in Church of England Schools via CPD, bespoke training and diocesan communications such as the School Leader Termly Briefing. We also ran training for RE Hub Lead Practitioners and RE and CW Faculty Leads who will support other RE leads across the diocese, from all schools not just CofE ones. We delivered 38 training events and undertook over 130 visits to schools. Our support is valued by schools and was noted in reports following inspection.



This training and support is supplemented by individual contact via email and phone call, we are there to help when schools need us. Some of this support is pastoral and during 2025 the team have been present to support ten of our schools in the most difficult of circumstances, from the loss of a child or member of staff to complex HR cases. We know head teachers carry a heavy burden and when these things add to it, we do all we can to support them.

SDBE schools had 37 Ofsted inspections in 2025, SDBE officers were there to support during inspections and attend feedback. As we saw the development and roll out of the new Ofsted inspection framework, SDBE participated in the consultation process and then delivered training enabling head teachers and CEOs to meet with a senior inspector. This was highly valued by those who attended, allowing them to feel better prepared for a very different process of inspection.



Pupils leading prayer at the Leavers' Service, Salisbury Cathedral.

CofE schools also receive a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection and 2025 saw 29 of these. Every school listed for inspection in 2025 received a preparation visit and support. As part of the inspection process, just as for Ofsted, a member of the SDBE team talked to the inspector and we attended feedback. All of the SIAMS inspections in 2025 showed that our schools are living up to their Christian foundation and demonstrated a wide range of good practice, with Crockerton CofE Primary School mentioned in the SIAMS annual report.



Pupils from Wool CE Primary Worship Committee

Autumn 2025 saw SDBE leading training for clergy on how to support schools at our first session which was held in Devizes. We covered a range of aspects to help engagement, sharing the language and practices which we hope will build relationships. Participant feedback was very positive and we look forward to our next event in the summer term of 2026. We were also present at the summer clergy day and enjoyed meeting many members of clergy to talk about working with schools.

SDBE also worked hard in 2025 to support governance by recruiting and supporting governance roles for schools and academy trusts, as local representatives, trustees and members. We made 137 foundation appointments in 2025 and are grateful for those who volunteer their time and skills in this vital role. And we are always keen to hear from others who feel they have something to offer our schools in this space! Our involvement in governance is also “hands on”, with members of the team acting as trustees and as corporate member across a number of trusts. These roles are crucial as we support and challenge trusts.



Pupils at St Mark's on the opening of their spirituality garden.

The SDBE team has worked throughout 2025 to deliver 16 capital projects totalling £1m for 12 schools, administer 42 trust funds and land manage 190 school sites. The legal complexities of these areas have been significant, but the team have worked hard to resolve two complex reverter processes, sell five old school sites, achieve Secretary of State approval for two historic trust fund closures and resolve a wide variety of land registry issues. This work continued to ensure effective stewardship of resources in support of children and young people, their schools and staff, and local communities.

Through 2025, SDBE worked on the diocesan strategy and engaged in development of strands of work. Our Estates Lead, Olivia Evans, worked alongside SDBF colleagues on net zero and climate care projects, an excellent partnership which continues to inform and support our diocesan commitment in this area. SDBE leadership also worked with SDBF on the strategy supporting the work on growing younger, training for clergy and the Flourish projects based in both CofE and community schools.

Members of the SDBE team continued to stand on local authority committees in 2025 where we attended the Schools Forums for both Dorset and Wiltshire, pupil place sufficiency meetings and the education leaders learning networks. Our newly appointed RE Advisor, Esther Culy, also represented the diocese Standing Advisory Committees for RE for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole, Dorset and Wiltshire local authorities.



Pupils planting a tree as part of Pitton CE Primary School's 175th birthday celebrations

This system presence extended to working with the Department of Education (DfE) to support schools and academy trusts, engaging in the DfE's RISE project for school improvement and participating in their round table groups to discuss and feedback on education policy in practice. Officers engage with civil servants to represent the needs of CofE schools and feed into the work of the department.

Over the last year, SDBE has continued working with dioceses across the southwest to share good practice and resources. This has seen our work on RE, EDIJ, collective worship and leadership develop with shared events in person and online, providing opportunities for colleagues to connect and learn with each other.

As you can see, 2025 was a busy year for SDBE, seeing us supporting, acting and advocating for our schools in a wide range of contexts. Education remains a complex space and one piece of feedback which we have valued enormously was from a member of the Department for Education who reflected on how important our presence is to support all schools, not just CofE ones, with a focus for children evidently at our heart. The SDBE team act wherever they can in support of schools, in support of children and young people, in support of staff and volunteers.

We are a small team, but we continue to show compassion, speak truth and offer hope wherever we can to make a big difference.

