UK Data Archive SN 7787 - Twenty-First Century Evangelicals

21st Century Evangelicals

A snapshot of the beliefs and habits of evangelical Christians in the UK - Spring 2013

Do we value education?



Research by the Evangelical Alliance

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evangelical alliance

Snapshot



attended churches where "we regularly pray for one or more of our local schools".



thought religious education (with a predominantly Christian emphasis) should be compulsory for all children throughout school life.



disagreed with the suggestion that Church - and other faithbased schools tend to divide communities in harmful ways.



agreed that schools should encourage children to question the consumerism and individualism of today's society.



84%

agreed that sex education without a clear moral value framework is harmful.



agreed that schools in deprived neighbourhoods should be given much greater resources.



agree that all schools should have regular assemblies with a Christian act of collective worship.



of parents felt it important to look for a school with a strong Christian ethos in terms of pastoral care and discipline.



agreed that there should be many more apprenticeships and high quality vocational courses suitable for less academic students.



of our respondents had a university degree.

This online survey was carried out in November 2012 with 1,377 members of the panel of evangelical Christians responding.

Involvement in education

73%	Have some significant involvement in education.
21%	Are parents of a child in school.
20%	Are employed in the education sector (among whom 15% are teachers).
12%	Are parents of a child in college or university.
11%	Are involved as a volunteer or regular visitor in a school setting.
10%	Are school governors (a third of whom do this as an official nominee of their church).
9%	Are attending training courses linked with employment.
7%	Are themselves part-time students.
6%	Are themselves full-time students.

Those with other involvements in education included youth workers, chaplains, librarians, private tutors, trainers and retired teachers.



School governors tended to be in the older age range and were slightly more likely to be men and to be parents of primary school-aged children.

Part-time students were concentrated among those born in the 1970s and 1980s.

Christians should be involved in education at all levels...one of the most promising mission fields.



Active members of a parents association tended to be mothers of primary age children.

† : **† † †**

Teachers at primary level were three times more likely to be female than male.

> I'm actually glad to have home-schooled my own kids.

I've recently started a group to pray specifically for our school.

I see teaching and education as a vocation, not just a job.

your learning or education?	More than average
I have not taken any further learning opportunities	
am still in full-time education	
<mark>6%</mark>	
I have been on adult education courses to pursue a hobby work or church life	y or interest outside
29%	Women and born before 1960
I have taken accredited courses which help in my church Christian discipleship	life, ministry or
34% Sorn before 1960, men, Angli	icans and Free Church members
I have undertaken a lot of self-directed learning, reading of 42%	Solution Skills development
I have studied for qualifications which help in my work or o	Career Pentecostals
I have been on more informal training to help in my church Christian discipleship	n life, ministry or
57% ON qualification	s and born in the 1940s or 1950s
Motivations for further study	ent weige Service related water entry employment

How have you continued

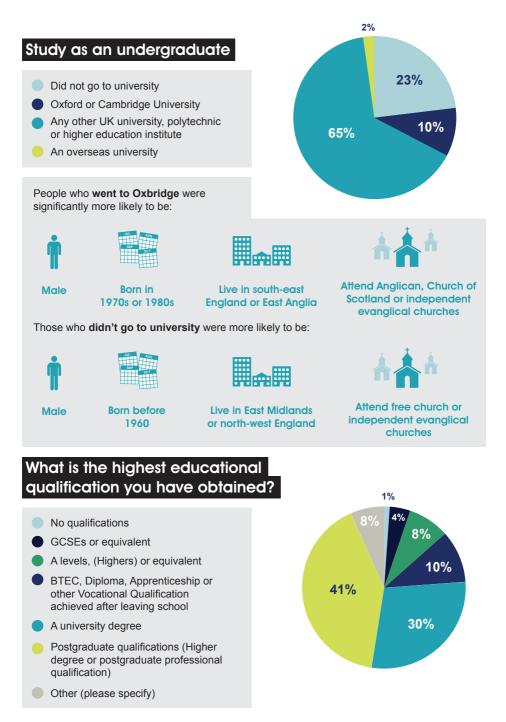
The most frequently mentioned subjects for continued education included theology and biblical studies, management and leadership and counselling.

personalinterest

improve

Schooling experience Up to the age of 11					
72% attended a local state primary school.	21% attended church (voluntary-controlled or aided) school.	14% attended a private (fee-paying/prep) school.	2% attended independent Christian schools (rising to 7% for those born in the 1980s).		
	For comparison in Eng				
23% had been to a nursery school or kindergarten.	20% of all primary pupils go to Church of England schools. (<i>Church of England figures</i>)	10% of all primary pupils go to Roman Catholic schools. (Catholic Education Service figures)	7% of all primary pupils go to independent schools. (Independent Schools Council figures)		
As a teenager Home-based education			More than average		
1%			Sorn after 1980		
An independent Christia	n school	Born in the 1980s, liv	ving in Yorkshire and the Humber		
A school outside the UK					
4%	4% Somen, born after 1960				
A private (fee-paying) bo	barding school		Sorn before 1960		
	ool (voluntary-controlled	or aided)			
A private (fee-paying) sc 11%	chool as a day pupil	۵	London and south-east England		
A Further Education or Sixth Form College 11% Graduates, born after 1980					
A grammar or other selective school 36% Postgraduates, born before 1960					
A state/local authority se	econdary school (compre	hensive or secondary m	nodern)		

Schooling experience



The most popular subjects studied at university level were **education** (mentioned by over 20%) and **theology** (over 13%).

Parental choice and aspirations

Secondary schooling parental choice

48%	A state/local authority secondary school (comprehensive or secondary modern).
13%	A church secondary school (voluntary-controlled or aided).
10%	Some other situation such as different schooling for different children.
10%	A grammar or other selective school.
7%	An independent Christian school.
7%	A private (fee-paying) school as a day pupil.
2%	A local academy or free school.
2%	A private (fee-paying) boarding school.
2%	Home-based education.

Changes in secondary school choices over time

Parents with all children aged 18 or over

		ch ageu i				
12%	10%	6% 5 1	%		9%	9%
arents w	ith vounges	st child age	ed between 12 and 17			
2%	16%	J	45%		5% 8%	8%
arents w	ith younges	t child age	ed between 5 and 11			
5% <mark>17</mark> 9	/o	11%	43%		7% 12%	
	ith younges					
5% <mark>15</mark> 9	6	18%	40%		10%	8%
Son	ne other situa	tion such as	s different schooling for different	children		
A ch	urch seconda	ary school (voluntary controlled or aided)			
🔵 An i	ndependent (Christian sc	lool			
	A state/local authority secondary school (comprehensive or secondary modern)			econdary	education i	
A lo	A local academy or free school				decision guidance gi	but rarely ven to par
A gr	A grammar or other selective school					e church.
A pr	A private (fee-paying) school as a day pupil					
A pr	A private (fee-paying) boarding school					
Hon	ne based edu	cation				
-						

Factors affecting school choice

Important or very important

More than average

I want(ed) an education that best suited the individual needs of each child 92% PATAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAP
I want(ed) the very best academic education for my child(ren) 91% PPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTPTP
The preference expressed by my child(ren) 78%************************************
l want(ed) a very local school for my child(ren) 74%************************************
I want(ed) a school with a strong Christian ethos in terms of pastoral care and discipline.
I want(ed) a school where Christian beliefs, values and a biblical worldview are taught.
The league tables of GCSE results 55% PATATATATATATATATATATATATATATATATATATAT
Offsed (or ISI) reports on the schools
I want(ed) to lessen the chance of them making friends with those who could be a bad influence
I want(ed) my child(ren) to attend a single-sex school

In a system which emphasises GCSE results and Ofsted reports it seems that evangelical Christians rate other factors as much more significant when it comes to choosing a school for their children.

I believe education is very important but I am also aware that each of us learn differently therefore one size does not fit all.

7%

Church schooling built the foundation upon which I later came to the fullness of faith.



What is the point of education?				
To help everyone to fulfil their potential as a human being 86%	14%			
To ensure every person can think for themselves 78%	22%			
To help build a healthy society where everyone is cared for a common good 73%	and has a chance to contribute to the			
To ensure all develop as caring people who value and treat pregardless of ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, ability or wea 71% Women and people born b	lth			
To equip people for a successful working life 59% 4	0%			
To give everyone a rich cultural experience and interest in th51%45%	e world around them			
To direct human development toward God's objective for hun godliness of character and action	man beings -			
48% Teachers 42%				
To shape a worldview which corresponds to Christian values 41% Students Women 47%	and biblical understandings			
To ensure that the country has a skilled and productive workforce and a prosperous economy 39% O Teachers 55%				
To help everyone to achieve high academic qualifications				
17% ^O Men ^{62%}				
We can make education an idol. These days it's far more important to me that I focus on my son's character development.	I warmly welcome this report which demonstrates such a high level of involvement in local schools and a broad concern for the quality of education. Far from being narrow, this survey shows that Christians have a positive attitude towards everyone's educational opportunities. Nola Leach, CARE chief executive			

evaluate informing choice

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We are very grateful for a good education system in our country, and regularly pray for teachers we know.

I object to state-

funded schools

inculcating any

children with liberal

humanism.

Education is a critical part of our society.

I think all education does need a moral framework - regardless of faith all children should be being taught that they are unique and special, that they have a purpose in life. They should be taught to love and respect each other, that differences in opinion are ok. The place of Christianity in education is under threat and constantly misrepresented. We need to stand firm in wanting to maintain a presence while also recognising young people need to learn about other religions too.

The hardest thing about education is the constant criticism that teachers get and then the constant questioning of standards that our pupils are achieving - it is demoralising.

Too many youngsters going to universities these days just means more educated dole queues.

Ofsted is destroying education...Teachers appear to live in fear and stress and surely children suffer as a result.

We need to work hard to keep the Christian ethos high on the agenda, as it is the basis of this nation's future hope and stability.

Jesus led me straight into life as a teacher. Eventually I became a deputy head, then a pastor, a local church network leader, a Bible college employee, and finally, but briefly, a Bible college leader.

I do think initiative overload has affected the morale and self-esteem of teachers.

I feel strongly that children brought up in a Christian family can flourish in a state school.

The current state-funded system of education in England is fractured, generally dysfunctional, confused, divisive and lacking integrity.

There is a significant difference between church schools and Christian schools.

I think Christians owe it to God and to our neighbours to be better educated in our own faith and also better educated in general. I strongly believe in education for life and not just for academic study.

The idea that "Every Child Matters" is a fallacy. Many teachers in secondary schools don't teach but coach students to pass exams. Education must be taken out of the hands of politicians. Once I became a Christian I resented school assemblies as I did not wish to worship with others who did not believe.

I have always been very glad that we have so many Christian teachers in our schools and that they have a strong Christian ethos, and are also open to Christian organisations coming in.

You're never too old to learn! At the age of 48 I've returned to study a Masters ...something I believe I've been called to by God.

Education is a lottery for students as it is unrealistic to think individual needs can be met with large class sizes.

Christian teachers have had a profound impact on my life in primary and secondary education, both as witnesses and in teaching a Christian worldview. My boys go a church school... there is always a nagging doubt that the very act of discrimination is some way fundamentally un-christian. Ideally it seems that perhaps the teaching staff should be expected to be committed Christians more than the pupils or parents.

I struggle to have a positive outlook on education. I think too much emphasis is put on academic achievement. I believe education has become a commodity rather than one of our greatest treasures.

Education at policy level has become the preserve of intolerant secularists. We need greater balance and a respect and tolerance of faith viewpoints.

I believe that having a true Christian ethos in a school will mean that it is open to everyone.

I visit schools regularly to tell Bible stories in the nursery and reception classes.

I think that teaching about Christianity by a person who doesn't know God can often confirm the belief that Jesus is dead. In general terms I am opposed to richer people buying a privileged education and cannot imagine Jesus doing this if he had a family. I love the fact that my children go to a school where God is talked about and Christian values permeate the school, however I don't think it is the primary responsibility of school to encourage my child's Christian faith, it is mine!

Our views on education essential or important Should be compulsory for all children throughout school life More than average Should be compulsory at an appropriate point in school life \bigcirc Less than average Should be an option available to every child at some point in school life Should not be on the curriculum English language (reading and writing, grammar and spelling) 82% 18% Mathematics 76% 23% Science 50% 5% 45% PE and sports 49% 41% 10% Computing and technology 48% 47% 5% Religious education (with a predominantly Christian emphasis) 23% 31% Teachers 42% English literature 25% 60% 15% At least one modern foreign language 23% 57% 20% British history 22% 65% 13% Religious education (with a broad coverage of all the world faiths and value systems) 19% Teachers 56% Students 23% Sex and relationships education 17% Teachers 60% 18% 5% Politics, citizenship and current affairs 16% 60% 23% World history (including issues around race and colonialism etc) 16% 63% 20% Geography 67% 15% 18% Art, music, dance & drama 15% 49% 36%

27%

Subjects that are

Those born before 1960

Wish to see Latin on the curriculum.

Would like to see religious education with a mainly Christian emphasis compulsory.

Those born after 1980

Place higher importance on world history.

Want religious education (with a broad coverage of all the world faiths and value systems) as a compulsory subject.

Want sex education and citizenship as compulsory subjects.

Women

Want religious education (with a broad coverage of all the worlds faiths and value systems) as a compulsory subject.

Put a higher importance on art dance and drama.

Are in favour of compulsory PE and sport.



Current political issues in education

Agree or strongly agree

Sex education	without a clear	moral value	framework is	s harmful

84%

In a multilingual community everybody needs to learn and be taught through the medium of English

83%	Living in Wales
Schools in deprived neighbourhoods sh	nould be given much greater resources
78%	Teachers
The government should reduce the em	phasis on testing children against target grades
73%	Teachers

Every child should be guaranteed a place in a good quality nursery school from the age of three **59%**

At least one parent should stay at home with their children until they start primary school

Educational standards have gone down since I was at school

40% Teachers

I support the government's plan to replace coursework-based GCSEs with qualifications based on more rigorous exams (the EBacc - English Baccalaureate)

38% Teachers

Government plans for academies or free schools independent of local authorities will improve the quality of education

24%

Private fee-paying schools should be abolished

11% Teachers

Schools should...

Agree or	strongly agree 🔇	More than average	Less than av	erage
Encourage chi	dren to question the	consumerism and in	dividualism of toda	ay's society
	ive uniform and dre	ss code		
75%				
U.S.	dents to be competi	tive in sports and aca	demic subjects	
74%				
	ol's work by agreeir	ng to a home school o		
72%			Teachers	
Ū	ssemblies including	a Christian act of col	lective worship	
69%				
Not arrange tri	ps or out of school a	ctivities which are too	o expensive for so	me families
50%		Teachers		
Exclude disrup	tive pupils from less	ons at an early stage	•	
49%		Teachers		
Be able to sele	ect which pupils get a	a place		
36%	Teachers			
Not teach child	lren in mixed-ability	classes		
33%	Teachers			
Teach the theo	ry of evolution in sci	ence lessons as the	most plausible acc	ount of the origin of

human life

26%

Schools would work better if they could enforce discipline using corporal punishment

23% Teachers

Education has changed, it has become more prescriptive and unrelenting, there is less time to think and reflect. Having assemblies as a child planted good seeds in my life about God and got me interested in Christianity.

> We need to place value on vocational training.

I believe strongly that where spiritual practice is compulsory children learn that faith is something false, which makes it much more difficult for them even in later life to hear the gospel.

Church and faith-based schools



The government should encourage and offer financial support to Christian and other faith-based schools

59% Teachers Church schools generally offer a higher standard of education than non-church school 52% A Parents of primary children, those born before 1960 Teachers and students Other faith communities such as Muslims, Jews, Sikhs and Hindus should have equal rights to government funding and support for their schools 52% Church schools should always give priority in admissions to children from churchgoing families 51% Parents should have the right to send their children to a school of their own faith at no extra cost

to themselves 51%

Teachers, Pentecostals and Charismatics

Church schools do not seem to be doing a very good job at producing committed Christians among their students

Students and those born after 1980 42%

Schools should leave the responsibility for the religious education of children to parents and faith groups

17%

Scotland, Northern Ireland and London, Pentecostals Scotland

Church and other faith-based schools tend to divide communities in harmful ways

10% Students

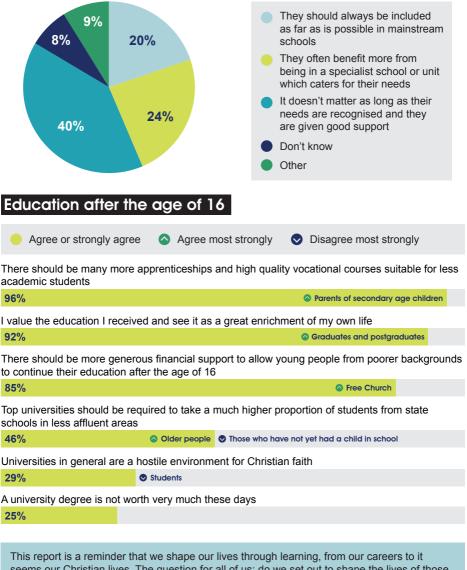
As a Christian it is very important to me that my children are educated by people who can encourage them in their faith. There needs to be a consistency between teaching at home and school. Our experiences with an independent Christian school have been very positive.

We have not chosen to send our children to faith-based schools as we believe that learning to deal with non-Christian life as a child is important.



Schooling for those with special needs

Many of us are involved in the lives of children who have special educational needs or a learning disability: 9 per cent as parents, 10 per cent as teachers, 15 per cent as close friends or relatives, and 35 per cent as church family.



seems our Christian lives. The question for all of us: do we set out to shape the lives of those entrusted into our care in the way that we ourselves were taught? Is the way that we were taught the most accessible today?

Gordon Gill, Prospects for people with learning disabilities



When we become a church which is accessible to everyone, we will be open to hearing everyone's voice and we will be closer to becoming the church that God intends us to be.

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Stephen Cottrell Bishop of Chelmsford Making Church Accessible to All Including disabled people in church life

WELCOMEN

Tony Phelps-Jones and other contributors

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http://www.brfonline.org.uk

Prospects supports churches throughout the UK in their mission outreach, discipleship and inclusion of people with learning disabilities, raising awareness of issues of language, attitude and inclusive practice.

www.prospects.org.uk

Our churches and education

Is your church involved currently in education?

More than average Less than average We are involved in consultation or policy issues with the local education authority e.g. through the Standing Advisory Council on Religious We have recently become involved in setting up Education (SACRE) a new academy or church school 2% 2% Pentecostal We have strong links with a local special needs We have an activity or support group for staff school/care home for children with learning disabilities from our local school(s) 3% 4% We have strong links with a local independent We mark Education Sunday or regularly hold Christian school services with an educational focus 6% Charismatic 7% Anglican or Free Church We run a homework club or supplementary We have strong links between our church and a school denominational secondary school 7% 7% Anglican We have adult education classes in our church We have good contact with or a ministry in a local Further Education or Sixth Form College building 10% 10% Free Church We have good links because our church meets We have good contact with or a ministry in a in a school building local university 11% 19% Charismatic We encourage adult church members to take up opportunities for education and training We have a local primary school specifically linked to our church throughout their life 22% 26% Analican and Church of Scotland We have an outreach activity with children on We regularly pray for one or more of our local school premises schools 28% 45% Analican and Church of Scot We have regular opportunities to go into a local We have in our church membership a number school to take assemblies of teachers or others who work in education 55% 82% Pentecostal Anglican and Church of Scotland

Does your church actively support or get involved with:

26%	Scripture Union
18%	Youth for Christ
13%	UCCF
12%	CARE/Evaluate
6%	Fusion
5%	Prospects
3%	Association of Christian Teachers
2%	XLP

I believe that churches & individual Christians should be involved as much as possible in every part of education.

Eight churches in my area work together to employ a Christian schools' worker for the local primaries and secondary school.

Until doing this survey I have been largely unaware of how little involvement our church has with local education.



24-7 Prayer wants to encourage and equip local churches to serve their local schools in prayer. Over the last few years, a new project from 24-7 Prayer - Prayer Spaces in Schools - has helped hundreds of schools to turn classrooms into creative prayer rooms, and tens of thousands of children and young people have experienced prayer, many for the very first time.

Phil Togwell, Prayer Spaces in Schools

Fascinating! This report will surprise both the critics and the friends of the evangelical Christian movement. Its significant contribution is to identify some important challenges for evangelical churches and their leaders to embrace in the coming decade.

Professor Trevor Cooling, National Institute for Christian Education Research, Canterbury Christ Church

So what? Education: challenges and chances



Evangelical Christians value education

Our respondents are a highly-educated group who appreciate and value the education they have received. Many are committed to lifelong learning and have undertaken study to better understand their faith and serve the Church. Significant numbers are involved in education as teachers, other staff or school governors. Personal experience of schooling is quite varied with some of the major differences relating to age and gender.

Education is important, because it helps to form our values. The challenge for us is to think about teaching and learning more biblically and theologically, and appreciating the vital importance of education as a mission field in the 21st century. This may require moving beyond learning mainly for career development, and a shift in the subjects we choose to study. Alongside studies concerned with church life and the pastoral care of individuals, we can be challenged to also see it as our role to develop a strategic engagement with a wide range of academic disciplines including politics, social sciences, medicine, physics, education and philosophy.

What's the point of education?

Our research shows that evangelicals are concerned about the relentless drive for higher academic standards at the expense of a more rounded education. There is strong support for the idea that education should challenge the consumerism in our society, and that secularism should be challenged in our school system. However, it is notable that the stated concern for character development seems to lack an explicit emphasis on cultivating Christian virtues and forming a thoroughly Christian worldview through the process of education.

The challenge is for Christians to understand and critique the educational practices which, in the name of neutrality, may be influencing children with the ideas of liberal humanism. While affirming the historic value of Christian education in the UK, we need to speak out for a genuinely open public space, where the Christian worldview can be expressed on equal terms with other faith-based and non-faith philosophies.

Church and education

The survey shows that many evangelicals are involved in education in both church and non-church schools. Many churches have strong links with schools, and to a lesser extent universities, and there are widespread opportunities for youth and prayer organisations to lead assemblies and get involved in the life of local schools. Importantly, many churches regularly pray for local schools.

The challenge is to ensure that church schools are authentically Christian schools in ethos and practice. We also need to value teaching as a God-given vocation. This means supporting the teachers and students in our congregations by seeking to understand the pressures they face and praying for them. We should also encourage and support school governors and ensure that they are trained and equipped to work effectively in their vital role.

Opportunities for new vision

The survey suggests that evangelical Christians, and particularly the teachers among us, are not happy about the state of schooling in Britain today. A general discontent with tuition fees, student debt and the emphasis on testing is accompanied by little confidence that government reforms will make a positive difference. There is however widespread support for government funding for church and other faith-based schools, and a perception that these have a better ethos and educational standards than average.

The challenge is to move on from mere grumbling to providing a better vision for schools and other educational institutions. Churches should take opportunities to build relationships and partnerships with local schools, and also to affirm the vision of the Christian schools with which they are linked. Some may wish to consider establishing independent Christian schools or colleges, or exploring the possibilities for establishing academies and free schools. All of these initiatives are challenging, but when values and vision are involved Christians have a responsibility to act.

Christian choices in education

When choosing a school for our children the survey showed that factors such as locality and academic reputation are clearly important. It also showed that having an authentic Christian ethos and the teaching of a Christian worldview are more popular factors than Ofsted reports or league tables (although it is true that some parents do not have a choice in which school they send their children to). Even so, only a handful of respondents suggested they had prayed or sought God's guidance about the choice.

In a society where school and university decisions are widely seen as a consumer choice, Christians need to ask themselves if they are behaving any differently to secular parents. There are also ethical questions to be addressed about whether it is appropriate for a church school to concentrate mainly on measurable academic performance. The challenge for Christian parents, and for the church leaders advising them, is to prayerfully consider the educational options available to them on the basis that our children are not conformed to the pattern of this world, but are transformed by the renewal of their minds.

Fairness in education

Our survey indicates that the large majority of evangelicals desire high quality educational opportunities to be available to all, and for lifelong learning to be encouraged. There is strong support for increasing the availability of apprenticeships, for making access to further and higher education more affordable to those of limited means, and for putting additional money into education in deprived areas. A majority support the case for equal resources for faith-based schools of any religion, and 46 per cent agree that top universities should be required to take a much higher proportion of students from state schools in less affluent areas. Over half have some personal experience through family, church or school of children with special educational needs.

While there are generous attitudes towards the educational needs of people with less financial resources, and a substantial commitment to serve those with special needs, the challenge for us is to speak up for a fairer education system for all, and to become actively and practically involved in delivering such a system.

Afterword

Our research on education is fascinating. It shows that evangelicals continue a long established tradition of valuing and being involved in schooling. Although our education system is often unfair in terms of opportunities and outcomes, it is encouraging that Christians are concerned and working to ensure that the blessings of learning are passed on to the next generation and across every section of society.

There are some challenging issues about the nature of a Christian approach to education, and the expression of a biblical worldview in a public realm where secular thinking tends to dominate, and where consumerism and economics tend to shape provision of schools and universities. As parents we need to reconsider prayerfully our attitudes and preferences in education, checking that we are guided by Godly rather than worldly attitudes. Christians have both responsibilities and opportunities to be involved in education. Engagement is taking place through the teaching vocation, and developing stronger links between our churches and local schools. Church schools, new faith-based academies and independent Christian schools all have a role to play in this vitally important mission field. There is much about education in the UK to disagree with, but it is essential that we move on from grumbling to providing a clearer vision for Christian engagement. Helping children to grow towards a Christ-like character within a caring community should be a priority for us all.

Steve Clifford, general director, Evangelical Alliance

Discussion questions and a PowerPoint presentation of key findings can be downloaded free through our website.

You can also join our research panel at eauk.org/snapshot



More detailed information about the research can be found at eauk.org/snapshot and a fuller data report is also available on request from g.smith@eauk.org













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