HOW BEST CAN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION ISSUES AT DIOCESAN SCHOOLS?

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT OF THE TASK TEAM ESTABLISHED BY THE PSC OF SEPTEMBER 2020

20 JUNE 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the product of a process established by the Provincial Standing Committee (PSC) of 2020 which called for a Task Team to work ‘with the different Anglican schools to make recommendations on how best the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) can address discrimination issues at Diocesan schools.’ The Task Team did not conduct an enquiry, or a probe, but sought to work with Anglican schools to develop a set of recommendations that would not be a conclusion, but a step in an ongoing journey within the Southern African Anglican community that reflect challenges in South African society.

The context of the resolution of the PSC was that, in 2020, many Anglican schools received representations from alumni and/or current learners regarding experiences of discrimination in these schools – mostly of a racial nature but also on other grounds such as gender identity. While the central concern was common, the form and outworking of the protests was nuanced from place to place. In some schools, the immediate approach was investigative and disciplinary, in others this approach was rejected in favour of seeking institutional change. The Task Team was aware of the nuances, but it understood the PSC’s mandate to the Task Team was not to ‘investigate’ or ‘inquire into’ but to ‘work with’. The Task Team therefore chose to listen to schools and work in consultation and collaboration with them, and has not followed an investigative approach.

This approach was informed by the understanding of the Task Team that challenges of discrimination are a feature of South African society, and are profoundly part of our particular history, but are also reflective of broad global challenges. While we characterise this as a journey, this does not imply that it can be undertaken at a leisurely pace. The urgency of our individual and collective response increases the longer we fail to act with determination on the long overdue steps as schools, as ACSA, and in our Southern African society. It is imperative that we all, and at all levels, act more urgently to disrupt the comfort of our ‘blind spots’ and acknowledge, and address, the wounds of our past. Delay in our willingness to ‘hear’ pain, and to take appropriate action, is a denial of justice, and withholds possibility of healing of self and others. Indeed, it was the absence of a sense of urgency which caused schools to be taken by surprise by the protests of 2020. This urgency must propel Anglican schools to address those ‘blind spots’ which continue to block the achievement of the ideal of a ‘faith in a God of love acted out in the detail of school life’.

The central concept underlying the recommendations in this report is that schools are not separate from society, and all the recommendations propose processes for continuing and accelerating the journey of combating discrimination. The determination of schools to combat discrimination in all of its forms must be supported by the structures of ACSA through the leadership that they can provide to schools from their different loci of influence. The fourth recommendation urges schools to see themselves, and each other, as a resource of learning and reflection.

These recommendations follow a brief outline of the mandate. The report has a short section on the local and international context, in which reference is made to the work underway in the Church of England. Our challenges are not unique, but do have a specific historical and structural context.

The Task Team was established by ACSA. It was not asked to provide a generic report (such as for example might be useful for a structure such as the South African Human Rights Commission). It is a

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Task Team that is specifically Anglican, and it has been intentional in adopting an Anglican character. The approach of the Task Team has been to consider what is the essentially ‘Anglican’ approach to the issue of discrimination. The socio-historical context of this framing is important. For example: on matters of race, positions of previous ‘commissions’ of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (now known as ACSA) made recommendations in respect of racial exclusion that were adopted in a context of formal Apartheid. The South African Constitution of 1996 may have declared ‘constitutional equality’ – but inequalities that are a consequence of apartheid persist, including the social and economic power relations that sustain them. Leadership debates in relation to sexual and gender identity are now both current, and urgent.

The Church, and its schools, are required to be vigilant in demonstrating the essence of the gospel to new questions that arise in society. Schools are an organisational formation at the forefront of grappling with these ideas, and the Church has an opportunity to provide counsel and leadership to its schools. However, the authority of the Church is not a given. This role is earned by the consistency with which the church establishes and maintains relationships with its schools and pays attention, and is responsive to, the many challenges schools face.

Section 6.1 offers some considerations as to the essence of Anglican schooling, with some reference to the diverse nature of the community of Anglican schooling in the Southern African region. Section 6.2 explains the position adopted by the Task Team namely that change comes from locating responsibility where it must remain for the change to be sustained and argues that there is little value in submitting a report that will ‘sit on a shelf’ and which has not included in its development those who must grapple with implementation. This report will therefore remain a work in progress and the work identified in this report will continue in schools, in the leadership of bishops across the diverse dioceses of Southern Africa, and in the support role played by ACSA. The submission of the report is a ‘handing over’ to those who must lead the continuation of the journey. There are, however, two issues on which the Task Team wishes to continue to consult with, and learn from, schools, and requests that it be allowed to submit an additional report once that process is concluded.

Section 7 explains the sequence of steps undertaken by the Task Team in its work including its interactions with synod and with schools.

Section 8 is the heart of the report. It is the outcome of the processes undertaken with schools and is the basis on which the Task Team has the confidence to submit its recommendations. The Task Team invited schools to share their experiences, listened to these, and then summarised the schools’ responses as a ‘mirror’ in a comprehensive report to all participating schools. The Task Team then asked schools to reflect on the report, and share what support they might need from the Church, and what might be their own envisaged individual next steps (after consultation with internal stakeholders).

It is clear that schools are ready and willing to take significant strides – and many have already done so. What schools are asking for is the committed and sustained attention of the church to relationships of support. It is our view that the conversations can be reciprocally enriching for schools and the church.

This report and its recommendations are a product of the processes above. It is not an end – but a step on the way.

3 The third interim report can be accessed on the ACSA website: https://anglicanchurchsa.org/third-interim-report-of-task-team-on-discrimination-in-schools/ (accessed 2 April 2022)
1. MANDATE AND TASK TEAM MEMBERS
The Provincial Standing Committee (PSC) of 22 – 25 September 2020 resolved to ‘establish a Provincial Task Team to work with the different Anglican Schools to make recommendations on how best the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) can address discrimination issues at Diocesan schools.’

The resolution noted:
- The Church’s mission to seek to secure the rights of all human beings irrespective of colour, gender, sexuality, or nationality.
- The number of former and current learners who have disclosed discrimination at our Anglican schools on the grounds of their racial background or sexuality.
- Some of our Anglican schools are addressing this critical need and are encouraged to hasten the process.

The PSC was requested ‘to release a statement that ACSA does not support any form of discrimination and assures the victims of its prayers and support’.

The resolution was an important leadership step by ACSA in responding to a public and social media debate focused on some Anglican schools, but more importantly, a demonstration of leadership by ACSA in relation to a festering social wound. Issues of discrimination in schools took centre stage, but these issues are not absent in the congregations and communities of which schools are part, and in (and between) the homes, workplaces, and communities in which learners, their parents, school staff are located, and in which they interact. Tensions related to discrimination in schools are one manifestation of a broader social problem and cannot be resolved by schools alone. The responsibility for leadership in schools and in society is central to the mission of the Church. This is an opportunity for the Church to lead.

The Task Team was established at the end of 2020 and was ‘requested to give feedback at the 2021 Provincial sitting (be it Synod or PSC)’. The Task Team has provided three interim reports to the Synod of Bishops and to Provincial Synod (24th February 2021; 20 September 2021; and 16 February 2022). The Task Team was comprised of the following members:
- Ms Mary Metcalfe (Chair).
- Bishop Allan Kannemeyer.
- Bishop Peter Lee.
- Revd Delani Mthembu.
- Mr Lebogang Montjane.
- Ms Tholoana Makhu.
- Revd Jaques Pretorius.
- Ms Sue Redelinghuys.
- Revd Roger Cameron.
- Dr Mathakga Botha (deceased, January 2022).
- Ms Thandile Ntshwanti.
- Ven Douglas Torr

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4 The resolution was proposed by Ms. Kim Williams of the Diocese of False Bay, and seconded by Mr. Teboho Makhalanyane of the Provincial Youth Council, was adopted after a number of amendments were accepted, including wording recognising that some schools are addressing the problem but urging them to speed up the process. https://anglicanchurchsa.org/psc-resolution-on-discrimination-at-anglican-schools/.

5 Ibid.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION 1: Diocesan Support for Anglican Church Schools

Diocesan Structures, as part of their mission, are to actively support Anglican schools to combat discrimination in all of its forms

Anglican schools are part of society and will reflect the broad-ranging attitudes, debates, and tensions of society. Discrimination in various forms is a societal matter, and schools provide leadership in the dynamics of their own internal and external complexity. Each and every school will benefit from the engaged leadership of the church through its diocesan structures and processes in order to provide the necessary influence, support, and leadership on these matters.

This must be an intentional, disciplined, undertaking led but those who have executive authority – the School Head strongly supported by Diocesan structures – and requires effective relationships established by a bishop with each school, the influence of the representatives of the diocese as participants in decisions of the governing structures of schools, the leadership role of Chaplains, and the support provided by Diocesan education structures where these have been established.

The Task Team proposes that two issues on which we wish to recommend further engagement with schools in the second half of 2022: individual school policies in respect of chapel attendance and gender and sexual identity. These issues should be prioritised for engagement between schools and bishops as well as diocesan structures during the process of this engagement.

### RECOMMENDATION 2: A Common Framework of Anglican Values

ACSA is to exercise its leadership in its work with schools on the basis of a common framework of Anglican values and principles

What should guide the attitude of schools on all matters of discrimination is our duty of care to learners. We have to be vigilant in ensuring that no child in an Anglican school is hurt by a failure to anticipate and take actions to ensure that there are no acts of intentional or careless discrimination, or systematic marginalisation of individuals or their identity.

Schools must be uncompromising in taking determined action to support the emotional and social well-being of all children by creating a culture and a set of practices which demonstrate ‘a God of love acted out in the detail of school life in which constant links are made between faith, human need, and love of neighbour’.

The guiding principle in school life should be care and respect for the uniqueness and value of every single child in the school’s charge, and in which all children develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique, and precious individuals with the courage and confidence that flow from that realisation; and where, through the experience, the language and attitude of worship, children learn to worship and so learn their own infinite worth.  

As schools wrestle with the application of such principles in their responsiveness to societal challenges, the above set of values can be further debated, elaborated on, and improved in each Anglican School on an ongoing basis, and in conversation with Diocesan structures and processes.

The values that are adopted can provide a vehicle for ongoing personal and institutional reflection and action.

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7 The set of principles summarized in Recommendation 2 are drawn from texts referred to in section 5.1.
RECOMMENDATION 3: ABESA’s Support for Anglican Church Schooling

The Anglican Board of Education for Southern Africa (ABESA) is to support schools individually and collaboratively in their journeys of recognizing, acknowledging, and combatting discrimination.

In 2012 Archbishop Thabo Makgoba responded to the education challenge by presenting a vision statement to an assembly of leaders of the Church, schools, and society. Outcomes of this meeting included a proposal that the Anglican Church elevate quality education as one of its priorities, and that an Anglican Board of Education be established to support the good work of many Anglican schools and be a conduit for the establishment of high-quality, accessible, faith-based schools and to serve as custodians of Christian ethos in education. This was later formalised by Provincial Synod.

While ABESA does not own or manage any Anglican school directly, its mandate is to inspire and represent ACSA in educational matters and to offer support and facilitation to schools and dioceses in concert with bishops and local educational structures in relation to all spheres of education including public schooling, early childhood development, and independent Anglican schools.

ABESA therefore has a mandate to offer support to schools in their role as custodians of a Christian ethos in education. But this is not a substitute for the role of bishops.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Documenting The Narrative: The Power Of Story-Telling

Schools should be encouraged to ‘tell the story’ of their journeys towards healing and reconciliation, and these should be documented and shared; and, if possible, collated and archived.

The historical narrative of what has been happening regarding issues of discrimination, and how schools have learned and grown in response can be:

- A powerful source of ongoing internal reflection.
- An opportunity for a collaborative critique, encouragement, and growth-inspiring challenge across schools.
- An opportunity to share frameworks that worked, practical tools, and examples on an ongoing basis.
- A resource for a potentially broader audience than the community of Anglican schools.

External resources that facilitate the conversations necessary to harvest and probe recent memory might help schools access not-yet-articulated learnings and assumptions and help members of the school community to continue a journey of understanding alternative perspectives.

Telling the stories internally will be a starting point, and the ongoing process of story-telling can be a resource for ongoing healing and reconciliation.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT GIVING RISE TO THE MANDATE OF THE TASK TEAM

The resolution of the PSC establishing the Task Team was adopted in 2020, twenty-four years after the adoption of South Africa’s Constitution the preamble to which acknowledges our painful history and calls upon all South Africans to work to heal ‘the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights’. The Constitution and the
1994 ‘democratic transition’ did not ‘shut the book on the past’ but exhorts us to understand how the past continues to frame the present.

South Africans continue to live in a society which is fractured across race and class and the power relations embedded in these. It is a society which sees gender in terms of binaries, and race through the fractured lens of class. All South Africans live within these fragmented personal and collective histories and experience its legacy and current tensions in different ways, depending on their race, class, and gender location, and on their exposure to opportunities to understand the perspectives of those who occupy different spaces. Because our histories are complex, any individual South African will inevitably have a partial view of the whole. The persistence of discrimination, particularly of unacknowledged racial discrimination, is a major fault-line in our society and is reinforced by persistent inequality. Because our experiences are so diverse, the expression of (or unwillingness to reflect on) different perceptions can be extremely divisive and hurtful within the body of the Church, its institutions, and in society. Leadership that results in action and change is required.

South Africa is not alone in dealing with multiple forms of entrenched discrimination. In June 2020 the Church of England’s House of Bishops agreed to the creation of an Archbishops’ Taskforce, which led to a Commission mandated to implement “significant cultural and structural change” on issues of racial justice within the Church of England. The House of Bishops stated: “For the Church to be a credible voice in calling for change across the world, we must now ensure that apologies and lament are accompanied by swift actions leading to real change.” The Report, ‘From Lament to Action’ provided the theological rationale for this work from,

‘the foundational commitment that we are all wonderfully and fearfully created in the image of God (Psalm 139:14 and Genesis 1:27). This requires us to emphasise the intrinsic value in each and every human being, making mutuality and responsibility towards one another a theological mandate’.

In May of 2020 in the United States, visceral images of an African-American, George Floyd, being choked to death by a police officer resulted in wide-spread national protests under the banner of ‘Black Lives Matter’.

This movement resonated with a growing frustration of young black South Africans whose experiences of discrimination and ‘not belonging’ in educational institutions and in historically ‘white’ social spaces was grafted onto family and community narratives of dispossession and marginalisation and suggested an unbroken continuity between institutional practices of an apartheid past and obdurate patterns of power and privilege in the present. The confidence and courage to express the deeply felt injuries (many of which had remained hidden in pockets of private and unexpressed pain) grew out of a growing student activism from the ‘Rhodes must Fall’ movement from 2015. Young people who had not confronted hurtful experiences at schools found their voice as university students to reflect on their experience of superficial inclusion or ‘diversity’ that was, at best, merely being ‘allowed to be present’, without any intentional engagement with diversity, with colonial practices, and, at worst, unquestioned hostility to difference with reports of extremely hurtful language and actions.

The expressions of pain and anger, of both alumni and current learners in Anglican schools, were expressed in social media during a period when schools were closed because of COVID, and there was little opportunity for interaction and mediation. The nature of social media minimised

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9 The experience of schools as reported to the Task Team is covered in The Report to Schools of January 2022.
opportunities for dialogue and mediation, and the outpouring of testimonies of shocking experiences of racism provided the context for the PSC resolution taken in 2020.

4. THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF ANGLICAN CHURCH SCHOOLS

ABESA currently has records of some 367 schools in some form of relationship with 18 of the 28 Dioceses of the ACSA. Two hundred and eleven of these schools are in the Diocese of Lesotho, and 31 in the Dioceses of Swaziland and Namibia. One hundred and twenty nine schools are in South Africa, 44 are registered as public schools on church land, and 81 as independent schools, of which 13 are state subsidised. The spread of these schools across the region in each of these three sector categories is represented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROVINCIAL REGION &amp; DIOCESES</th>
<th>SECTOR OF SCHOOLING</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>State-subsidy</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Grahamstown</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mthatha</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mzimvubu</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Gauteng</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christ the King</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highveld</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johannesburg</td>
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<td>Pretoria</td>
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<td>Natal</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Limpopo</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St Mark the Evangelist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
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<td>Mpumalanga</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Cape Town</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td></td>
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<td>False Bay</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saldanha Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dioceses outside of South Africa</td>
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<td>Lesotho</td>
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<td>Namibia</td>
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<td>Swaziland</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td>367</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the recommendations of this report are relevant and applicable for all dioceses and schools within ACSA, the main focus and feedback has come from the South African schools. Ten percent of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) member schools are in some form of association with the ACSA. The 80 Anglican schools that are members of ISASA employ 4 500 staff, 2 200 of which are educators, serving the educational aspirations of 23,700 learners. Fifty-five are primary and pre-primary schools, whilst 30 are secondary schools. Sixteen of the 30 secondary schools charge an annual academic fee of over R130 000 per pupil.
School fees are a necessary element of independent schools. The South African Constitution is clear as regards the right to establish an independent school, that there is no obligation on the state to fund a private (independent) school. Section 29(3) indicates that everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, an independent educational institution that does not discriminate on the basis of race (as long as they are registered with the state and maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions). Current government policy allows that ‘low-fee’ independent schools may receive a state subsidy.

Independent schools are therefore dependent on the income stream from fees to sustain themselves\(^\text{10}\). Apart from the historical provision of some land and infrastructure, to varying extents, no subsidy is received from the Church to Anglican Church schools. The fees charged by Anglican schools are determined by their governance structures within the context of a free market. The consequence of this is that Anglican schools are segmented in the range of fees that are charged, and therefore mirror the inequalities of South African society within the range of socio-economic sectors that are able to make a contribution to the fee-base of a school. This, in turn, mirrors persistent inequalities across population groups.

An analysis of fees charged (in five categories\(^\text{11}\)) in Anglican schools, using 2018 ABESA data, illustrates the preponderance of ‘black’ learners in schools charging lower fees, and the preponderance of ‘white’ learners in schools charging higher fees:

- 51% of ‘Black’ learners are found in the lowest three fee categories, with 31% in the top fee category.
- 8% of ‘White’ learners are found in the lowest three fee categories, with 58% in the top fee category.
- An average of 72% of learners in the lowest fee categories are ‘Black’ learners, whilst 12% are ‘White’ learners.
- 24% of learners in the top fee category are ‘Black’ learners, whilst 57% are ‘White’ learners.

The distribution of teachers and school leaders by population group is similar to that of learners:

- 12% are ‘Black’ educators; and 56% are ‘White’ educators.
- 6% of educators in a management role are ‘Black’ educators, whilst 72% are ‘White’ educators.

Fee category and predominant population group of school analysis indicates that:

- 47% of ‘Black’ educators teach in the lowest three fee categories, with 37% in the top fee category.
- 12% of ‘White’ educators teach in the lowest three fee categories, with 60% in the top fee category.
- In predominantly ‘White’ learner schools’ 67% are ‘White’ educators, whilst 9% are ‘Black’ educators.
- In ‘predominantly ‘Black’ learner schools’ 45% are ‘White’ educators, whilst 31% are ‘Black’ educators.

\(^{10}\) The Task Team recognises that the Constitutional provision for independent education, sustained by school fees, should not pass as a ‘logic’ without constructive critique as to the complexities it raises, especially for ACSA as a stakeholder since the mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century. In its pursuit of social cohesion and social justice, ACSA remains cognisant of these complexities in the educational landscape and should be ready to engage.

\(^{11}\) Fee categories in R's: Category 1: 0 – 14 000; Category 2: 14 001 – 35 000; Category 3: 35 001 – 63 000; Category 4: 63 001 – 100 000; Category 5: 100 001+
These visible inequalities in participation in, and leadership of, our Anglican Schools must continue to be a subject of critical reflection - just as addressing inequalities in our society must never be far from the overall mission and work of ACSA and of society. In our ongoing actions to combat discrimination, we need to reflect on how systemic race-based inequality reinforces the discrimination we wish to work against, and how the power that comes with privilege brings responsibility to act for the greater common good.

Schools are in society and are therefore reflective of it. The formulation of a sound theological framework affirming the dignity of each human person, and the role of schooling in enabling the flourishing of every child within a Christian value system that stresses equality and the rights, dignity and worth of all for the sake of the common good is important, and must sustain our commitment to root out discrimination.

5. A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANGLICAN CHURCH SCHOOLING

Whilst Anglican Church schooling in South Africa, in respect of ethos, identity and practice as a form of faith-based schooling, is not governed by a single policy document; its theological framing emerges from the stitching together of interpretations of biblical texts12; theological engagements with the idea of education and the discourses embedded in the founding stories of schools. Anglican Church schooling in South Africa is located theologically in what is broadly described as the Anglo-Catholic Benedictine tradition. The sacramental, incarnational, and trinitarian themes which permeate this tradition inform and underscore the notions of dignity, wisdom, hope and community as definitive elements in the theological underpinnings of church schooling.13 Educating for dignity, wisdom, hope, and community are all elements of seeking justice and acting for the common good in the world.

When framed theologically in this way, an Anglican church school then can be engaged with conceptually as a community in which Christian spiritual practice is an integral part of the governance, management, academic, cultural, economic and political context of teaching and learning. This spiritual practice is understood to be guided by the Benedictine ‘rule of life’, a rhythm of prayer, study, work, recreation and rest, as well as the Anglican ethos of ‘scripture, reason and tradition’. This threefold hermeneutic and the Benedictine practice reminds the whole school community that it is grounded in a reality ‘deeper than knowing and more enduring than time”; a reality humbly named God – as a community of persons, inviting us into the same. Consequently, daily prayer, the reading of scripture, the regular celebration of the Eucharist, divinity classes and the liturgical marking of the great festivals of the ‘church year’, all provide a particular context to the academic and co-curricular education experience. This liturgical and pedagogical practice narrates the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as foundational to the ever-evolving Christian theological traditions of the dignity of each human person, the sacredness of the earth as our common home, and the call to act for the justice and peace of God to come on earth. Infused with this dynamic of spirituality, an Anglican Church school offers each member of the community an opportunity to flourish in a diverse community of inclusivity, respect and courage. In particular, an Anglican church school seeks to nurture a space for the emergence of new generations of young people, who are able to navigate and embrace the unique challenges facing contemporary South Africa and who are brave enough to envision and act for a different and better world.

In seeking to understand discrimination and racism in Church schools, this Task Team has needed to understand the Anglo-Catholic Benedictine tradition, historically characterising most Anglican Church schooling in South Africa, which theologically privileges the inherent dignity of the human

13 Church of England Education Office, 2016:3,
person and educational provision for the common good. We have needed to understand how this theological underpinning of policy and practice assists the journey of moving towards change in our schools in order to emerge to who we are – Anglican Christians in Southern Africa - therefore biblical, traditional, and shaped by the crucible of our history.

6. PRINCIPLES INFORMING THE APPROACH OF THE TASK TEAM

6.1. An Anglican Project
The Task Team was established as an initiative of the Anglican Church and operates under its authority. It reports to Provincial Synod and adopts the perspective of the mission of the church and the leadership of its institutions. It therefore approaches discrimination not only as a social responsibility in the pursuit of social justice, as envisaged in the South African Constitution, but as an integral part of the mission and vision of the ACSA.

There are several dimensions of the relationship between Anglican schools and ACSA which have shaped the approach of the Task Team.

6.1.1 The Exercise of Influence in Anglican Schools
The constitutional nature of Anglican Church schools in Southern Africa is defined by legal mechanisms ranging from an Act of Parliament, memoranda of incorporation of non-profit companies, and constitutions for voluntary associations. The Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (“the Constitution”) further provides through Act X, how the relationship between the Church and our institutions, including schools, may be formalised. While not all schools are signatories to Act X there is alignment with some of the provisions of Act X which are incorporated into the founding or establishing documents of some schools. Act X further sets out the role of diocesan bishops in the schools, as more fully articulated below.

In defining the nature of these schools as Anglican educational institutions, often referred to as diocesan colleges, the following phrases are used:
- In accordance with the principles of the ACSA.
- with due regard to its historical connection and current association with the ACSA.
- Anglican religious observances shall be conducted.
- within the tenets of the ACSA.
- is subject to the Diocesan Rules of the Diocese and the Canons of ACSA.
- espousing a Christian Anglican ethos and set of values, whose curriculum shall always include religious education.

A number of constitutions ensure that no amendment can be made to the Anglican religious identity and ethos of the school.

These legal mechanisms situate the governance of schools in the hands of Councils and Boards so defined. In all but one or two schools, the Diocesan Bishop is designated as Visitor, with the provision to appoint a representative to the governing body. The composition of all school councils usually includes at least one other representative from the Diocese, with some constitutions requiring a majority of Council members to be in good standing with their respective churches. Apart from the institutional gravitas accorded to the role of Visitor, whose representations should be seriously and respectfully considered, the diocesan bishop is more often than not required to:
- approve and licence the appointment of both Head of School and School Chaplain and admit them liturgically to their respective roles.
- approve the nomination for the position of Chairperson of the governing body.
• provide authoritative guidance and oversight for religious instruction, worship, spiritual welfare and the Christian identity and ethos of the school.
• exercise final arbitration in cases of disciplinary appeal, deadlocks, and any consideration of school closure.

Whilst schools are often referred to in different ways as educational institutions of a Diocese, they are not necessarily subject to the authority of a Diocesan Synod in the same manner as a Parish. The leadership of Diocesan structures in respect of schools is mediated through relationships that are built on principles of mutual respect. Influence is exercised by moral, spiritual, and intellectual persuasion rather than by authority and compulsion. Such leadership is, in fact, more effective in a complex area of change such as carving through the layers of denial and defensiveness that obscure a recognition of various forms of discrimination. This is part of the culture of the Anglican Church where authority is not exercised hierarchically but through conversation, through persuasion, and collective processes of decision making.

6.1.2 Admission To Anglican Schools And Liturgical Practice

Schools have requested specific guidance on the matter of attendance or participation in Chapel.

It is not the practice of Anglican schools to exclude students applying for entrance to their institutions based on religion or any other factors - as long as the school is able to accommodate the needs of the applicants. On the contrary, Anglican schools genuinely value diversity and the richness such diversity brings to the community. Furthermore, on what theological basis could a school exclude God’s child from admission, simply due to their faith practice?

This does not mean that students who don’t identify with the Anglican expression of Christian faith are exempt from Anglican practices that define the Anglican ethos of the schools. This ethos of the freedom of association is protected by the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act. It is defined by Christian spiritual practices - including prayer, worship, stewardship of the earth, a deep respect for others, love and compassions, service, an understanding of right and wrong, and a desire to walk in the light.

Parents and guardians of other faiths tend to choose Anglican schools for their children in full knowledge of the values-based ethos, and the expectation of inclusion in the school’s religious practice. As the chapel represents the heart of many Anglican schools and is used for both religious services and to gather and build community, Anglican schools have tended to require attendance at chapel of students of all faiths. As schools, chapel does serve an educational purpose. The exposure of students to the written word, as an expression of faith, both as the spoken word and placed within musical interpretation, as well as a first-hand experience of hermeneutics, augments the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom.

While overt in Christian identity and worship, it is reported that many schools have consciously made chapel and services welcoming of all. A common decision to avoid proselytisation seems to have informed the approach taken – in the full knowledge that the audience is captive and diverse. In most schools, respect has been duly given to diversity of religious beliefs, especially on specific religious holy days.

In some schools, alternate arrangements have been made to allow students of other religions to worship together separately at an alternate venue in the school – or to leave school early to attend worship. It does not appear as if Anglican schools have a coordinated or common approach to
dealing with liturgical expectations and many are looking towards the church for guidance in this regard.

This Task Team proposes further interaction with schools in 2022 to engage schools more deeply about their current policies and practices in order to better understand the challenges faced and the support required.

6.1.3 Anglican Schools Profess Anglican Values

Early in the life of the Task Team, inspiration in understanding the particular contribution of Anglican Schools in society was drawn from a 1998 text ‘The importance of Church Schools’ by Dr George Carey14, The Archbishop of Canterbury. The following text-box is a series of pertinent selections from a rich chapter (which deserves a full reading).

EXTRACTS FROM ‘THE IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH SCHOOLS’ (Dr George Carey, The Archbishop of Canterbury, 1998)

The Church In Service of Society – Looking Outward – Not Inward, Linking Faith To Human Need

“Church schools are so important, precisely because they are not perceived as separate, holy places dedicated to some separate realm called religion. They are in the thick of society, places where so many people are educated. Even more than most Church social projects, they make the link between faith and the aspirations of people - not in particular the sick, the elderly, the bereaved, the vulnerable or some other special category of need, but all kinds of children growing up. Christianity is seen not as a set of abstract doctrines, but as faith in a God of love acted out in the detail of school life.”

Church schools “are not just for Christian people: most Church of England schools are open to many pupils who are not from Christian families. They are places where religion is de-mystified and where children can become not more pious, but more fully human. They are places where the incarnation continues, where the divine comes down to earth, where the Word is a living word which touches the lives of God’s children and the communities in which they live. In short, Church of England schools earth the Church in broad sectors of the population keeping her looking outwards, in service to society at large, making constant links between faith and human need.”

Church Schools: Spiritual, Moral And Social Dimensions and The Experience Of Worship

“Church schools have a licence ... from their special Christian foundations, to attend wholeheartedly to the spiritual and moral dimensions of education...”

“The development of a fully human being - measuring up to the stature of Christ - is not the task of the school alone. But schools have a major contribution to make. Children must learn to face questions of the meaning of life and death and the purpose of their own lives. They need to develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique, and precious individuals, with the courage and confidence that flow from that realization.”

“There are opportunities for this spiritual development in every subject of the curriculum. But the best opportunity in the school is created by the act of worship, a time for reflection and prayer, a time to learn from the experiences and attitudes of men and women of faith, a time for every member of the school community to find space for themselves and for God.”

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“Schools cannot require children to worship but they can and should create a context day by day in which children can experience the language and attitude of worship, can learn to worship, and so learn their own infinite worth.”

“... the job of Church schools is not to try to get as many kids in the bag for the Church as possible. They do not serve that kind of narrow institutional purpose, and I know that you as educators would not put up with that. On the contrary, the starting point is the sharing of God's love, and the Christian values which flow from it, and hence the guiding principle is care and respect for the uniqueness and preciousness of every single child in your charge.”

“No educational framework, whatever it claims, is neutral or value free. Church of England schools are explicit about their Christian value base and ethos as a rich, secure setting - in which children can learn, grow, and equip themselves for life.”

**Role of Anglican Schools In Society**

“... a society without rules, without a strong sense of mutual responsibilities, love of neighbour and service to others is headed for disaster. It is also obvious ... that people who are affluent in material things will often lead impoverished lives if they are not nourished spiritually; if faith, hope, and love are swamped by empty consumerism.... Church schools know in their viscera that this is not just about acquiring skills and good examination results. It is about forming people who have the moral strength and spiritual depth to hold to a course and weather ups and downs. It is about forming people who know that economic competition is not more important than family life and love of neighbour, and that technical innovation is not more important than reverence for the beauty of creation. It is about forming people who, however academically and technically skilful, are not reduced to inarticulate embarrassment by the great questions of life and death, meaning and truth. Church schools themselves embody the truth that a context of firm principles suffused by faith and love is the best and right basis for learning and growing.”

There are many lessons for the work of this Task Team and for ACSA and Anglican schools in these extracts. The greatest lesson is that a school in which children in our care are hurt by the failure of the school to address acts of intentional or careless discrimination are failing in their essential roles of placing uncompromising primacy on care for the emotional and social well-being of children. This is evident in the creation of a culture and a set of practices:

- Which demonstrate a ‘God of love acted out in the detail of school life’.
- Which operate ‘in service to society at large, making constant links between faith and human need’.
- Where children ‘develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious individuals, with the courage and confidence that flow from that realisation’.
- Where children ‘experience the language and attitude of worship, can learn to worship and so learn their own infinite worth’.
- Which form ‘people who know that economic competition is not more important than family life and love of neighbour’.
- Where the ‘guiding principle is care and respect for the uniqueness and preciousness of every single child in your charge’.
- Which embody the truth that a context of firm principles suffused by faith and love is the best and right basis for learning and growing’.

All of this echoes the theological mandate of the Report ‘*From Lament to Action*’ which ‘requires us to emphasise the intrinsic value in each and every human being, making mutuality and responsibility towards one another a theological mandate’.  

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15 Op cit 7.
At the installation of the Head of Herschel Girls School, Claremont, Cape Town, on 6 February 2020, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba argued that the ‘church’s vision and mission is to work for the common good of all humanity... if we are to transform our country in accordance with the common good, we need our schools to reflect the diversity of the society in which we live. As teachers, learners and parents, whatever choices you have, whatever challenges you face, choose whatever it is that advances the common good’. Respect for diversity is thus a value which should be part of the framework of Anglican education.

6.1.4 The Journey Towards Wholeness (or Healing) by Acknowledging Discrimination, Manifesting Contrition, Taking Action, Establishing Trust, and Finding Forgiveness of Self and Others Embody Anglican Values

At the heart of the Christian gospel lies the message of forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness entails the honest acknowledgement of past mistakes, the willingness to take ownership for one’s actions and their consequences. When one forgives another, there needs to be a willingness through the power of God’s love to move forward.

No institution or individual is perfect. All institutions, and indeed, all Christians will at some, or other point, fail to behave in ways that are loving and respectful. Practices, and even thought patterns, are in need of constant review. Learning to understand personal and collective ‘culpability’ in intended or unintended actions of discrimination, and the active journey of contributing to healing, cannot be ‘short-cut’ by apology and the seeking of forgiveness without deep introspection, visible contrition, and the taking of actions which build the trust necessary for forgiveness. Only when this has been done is the way opened for reconciliation, and healing both for those that have been hurt, and for those that have caused hurt.

True forgiveness enables both communities and individuals to model for society at large the true meaning of ubuntu, which is understood as love, respect, affirming the dignity of others, and the intention to work for the common good of all. The Task Team acknowledges that this is a journey of individual and collective introspection and has adopted this approach of openness to learning and to change in its own work. We cannot “miss the step” of acknowledgement and taking accountability.

It is not an exercise in damage control, a seeking to mitigate threats of legal action, or even an exercise in upholding reputation. It is the seeking of ways through conflict, which honestly acknowledge hurts, and then deliberately engage in processes which are often painful and cannot be rushed, but which will ultimately bring about healing and wholeness. When this is done well creative systems can be put into place to avoid repeating past hurts, and new and life-giving practices can be introduced into the life of institutions and individuals.

Schools are often subjected to intense pressure from outside influences, including media (and particularly social media) for quick and immediately tangible results, and there is a temptation to want to get on with business as usual when conflicts, particularly those relating to issues of race, are brought to the fore. True healing and reconciliation require long-term commitment to seriously engage with the past in order to find new ways forward. If this modus operandi characterises the life of an Anglican school, it will commend the authentic practice of forgiveness to wider society. This is, in itself, a form of Christian mission.

6.1.5 The Task Team Proposes an Anglican Framework For Transformation In Schools

There is no doubt that much work needs to be done to hear and acknowledge the pain that our institutions, and their traditions, have caused individuals, or that they may have tolerated with insufficient attention to discriminatory assumptions. There is no doubt that change can no longer be at the inclination of individual institutions: the pace of change needs to increase, and major attention needs to be paid by schools to interrogating their cultures and practices and working transparently to improve them for the benefit of all stakeholders. Although change might be measured by greater representation at Board and management levels, the most important sign of authentic transformation lies in the hearts and minds of all, and will be reflected in the culture and practices of a school.

The following framework of understanding offered by this Task Team could be a starting point. Anglican Schools should continue to be engaged, through their Bishops and ABESA, in the ongoing work of creating an aligned, structured, supportive, and collaborative approach to change.

6.1.6 Incarnational and Contextual

Any Christian engagement starts with life as people experience it; we sit, walk and march with people where they are. This has been the hallmark of the best of Anglican ministry in Southern Africa. In our schools, therefore, we are about listening to the experience and views of community members and hearing what bears upon them, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and socially. The protests about discrimination which were levelled at many of our schools in 2020, touched many points that were wrong, but the task of transforming Anglican schools is an ongoing task.

6.1.7 Relational and Honest: Self-Reflective Practice

A school is a community, a place full of people relating to one another. The school should provide safety, a sense of family and affirmation of each child’s potential. Trust and integrity bring that forward; bullying and disrespect break it down. In particular, the challenges identified in this process require policies and strategies that overcome the baneful parts of our past and promote inclusion, participation, and collaboration in place of bias, prejudice and exclusion. Schools need to hear diverse voices and create safe spaces to enable these to be heard, most especially when they are dissonant and may have been previously suppressed. Intentional processes of dialogue are the way forward.

The process of challenging our deeply held assumptions begins with a conscious decision and requires a commitment to a process of learning more about racism and other forms of discrimination. This involves a commitment to better understanding and combating pervasive stereotypes and attitudes of superiority and inferiority, of competence and limited competence – and is a continuing journey. All South Africans have a particular responsibility to understand the deep personal pain of the other. This has to be a conscious commitment because in many interactions, this pain is concealed and unarticulated. We are all at different stages of this journey. Because we ‘know’ that discrimination is wrong, acknowledgment of discriminatory practices can be seen as occasion for blame, and the desire to be free of discrimination can result in perceptions of defensiveness and avoidance of difficult issues. The avoidance of discussion about difficult issues can elicit greater resistance from those who feel that their pain has not been heard. Our individual attitudes of discrimination are a function of our histories and of the society in which we live, that is, our context. It takes a deliberate and conscious journey to keep on identifying how these shape us.

There are a multitude of ways in which unexamined institutional power marginalises members for whom key elements of their identity (language, gender, race, class) are not recognised in institutional practices. This marginalisation engenders a sense of not fully belonging, of having to
sacrifice elements of one’s identity in order to belong. The Anglican Church acknowledges that these are South African realities from which we cannot escape without striving with determination and commitment to learn and grow from each other.

6.1.8 Diverse and Interdependent
Our schools are reflections of our society, sometimes at its worst. But they are also agencies for its future, where citizens learn to rejoice in difference, complement each other’s strengths, enjoy each other’s gifting, and build for mutual benefit. Schools need both to digest this reality – this Christian insight - into their corporate culture and keep on affirming it, but know how to manage breakdowns, ethnic or gender tensions, and complaints of discrimination or abuse. They need codes of constructive formation as well as disciplinary ones in the event of falling short. Working at these and wrestling with what interdependence means, is itself educational – especially when western notions of individualism and solo achievement have been part of the endemic culture of schools. In promoting respect for diversity, the core practice is to listen and understand the other. This should lead to greater personal insight, empathy and ultimately to changed behaviour.

6.1.9 Consultative and consistent
Schools need to be intentional in their processes of change. Our society exists because of dialogue, negotiation, and courageous conversations entrenched in instruments of aspiration and values such as the Constitution and its many derivatives. Young people need to learn to articulate, confront, listen, and relate. They have to learn what the search for respectful consensus is like, and how to pursue it, truthfully and generously.

6.2. An Invitation to a Collaborative Journey
From inception, the mandate of the Task Team was to work with different Anglican Church schools to make recommendations as to how ACSA can address issues of discrimination at Diocesan schools and the Task Team has sought to establish this as a collaborative learning journey.

In the first report to the Synod of Bishops in February 2021, the Task Team indicated that it would like to follow an invitational and inclusive approach where key stakeholders including the schools, their governing councils, and the responsible bishops interacted with the Task Team in this learning journey and in the development of the report.

We did not wish to produce a written report which is bound, distributed, and filed – but which is not fully engaged, and not enriched by those who must adopt the suggestions in the report in order for the recommendations to be successfully implemented and, indeed, monitored and improved over time. Our intention is for the recommendations of the report to assist in building a culture of reflection in the institutions that offer and support Anglican education.

In our reports to Provincial Synod and the Synod of Bishops, we have received support for our view that our recommendations must be the outcome of processes undertaken with schools, which schools, in turn. need to own and act upon. Support has also been received for the view that responsibility for sustaining this journey lies with the schools, supported by the bishops, ABESA and Synod.
7. OVERVIEW OF THE PHASES OF ENGAGEMENT

The figure below provides a high-level overview of the progression in the sequence of steps in the process followed by the Task Team, the time-frames, and the interim reports to both Provincial Synod and the Synod of Bishops.

7.1. Phase One January - August 2021: The Task Team’s Internal Reflection Process

In Phase 1, the Task Team undertook a process of collective and internal learning. The rationale for this was the need for the team itself, individually and collectively, to reflect on the learning journey and to deepen processes of the journey towards wholeness (or healing) by acknowledging discrimination, manifesting contrition, taking action, establishing trust, and finding forgiveness of self and others.

In this period, the Task Team adopted a set of preliminary framing principles including:

- While there have been changes in some aspects of our schools, particularly in the demographics of enrolment, there has not been enough change in the demographics of teaching staff, support staff, and governance structures.
- There is a strong view that the institutional fabric/culture of our schools has not, as a whole, changed/transformed.
- Different schools and all individuals are at different stages of the journey in acknowledging the need for transformation. Where progress has been made, this has been intentional, and determined, and has taken place in different contexts.
- Where transformation progress lags behind need, a consequence can be that some members of the school community feel that they do not belong; that they are not truly welcomed; and that the character of the institution is one that assimilates new members without the necessary transformation occurring so that all can be fully and equally included. Many cannot articulate their longing to feel that they belong and may lack of a vocabulary to express the pain, causing further frustration and isolation. This pain needs to be acknowledged, deeply heard, and responded to.
- This challenge has a particular historical context, as well as both a national and an international context. Identity and identity formation are particularly complex in South Africa.
• The exclusions, visible and invisible, are intersectional. They include power relations, race, class and economic status, gender, sexuality, disability, and how personal and institutional histories and associated values are regarded as normative.

Insights gained in this first phase were represented in the following diagram:

![Diagram](image)

It is critical to have a strong leadership with a clear vision of the desired end-point to which all participants commit. This requires an acknowledgement of complexity; non-avoidance of difficult conversations; a recognition that this must precede ‘reconciliation’.

Leadership will need to build confidence in the process of the journey; create safe platforms for learning; develop processes that are open to hearing grief and pain without feeling ‘blamed’.

This journey is complex and is a pre-requisite for peace, and for reconciliation.

7.2. Phase Two September - October 2021: Establishing a Process to Listen to Schools

The Provincial Synod of September 2021 received a summary report of the Task Team’s exploratory thinking in relation to:

• Anglican Schools and the Need for Transformation.
• The Essence of Anglican Schooling.
• Elements of the Proposed Framework For Change, Based on Anglican Principles.

In addition, the Task Team reported that the phase of listening to schools would commence in September 2021. The bishops agreed to send invitations to schools to attend virtual sessions.

Attendance at the school sessions of September/ October was based on the participation of the School Head, the Chaplain, and one other member of staff (if schools wished). The Task Team constructed the sessions on three key principles:

• Leadership of Bishops in the invitation to schools.
• The importance of beginning with the executive leadership of the schools.
• The Task Team’s commitment to listening to the schools’ experiences of learning.

The invitation to the sessions indicated that the key questions to be addressed would be:

• What happened?
• What have you learned?
• How have you moved forward?
Each of the four sessions began with a video-recorded message from Archbishop Thabo Makgoba which explained the purpose of the sessions thus: “The intention is to listen and hear, first-hand from you, to help us build a picture of all the dynamics and nuances which are at play, so that we can jointly develop the policy framework on discrimination.”

Discussions took place in small groups facilitated by Task Team members, with another member of the Task Team taking notes. These notes were shared with participants in the group after the session so that the notes could be corrected or expanded on.

Across the four sessions, there were more than 70 participants from 40 schools across 10 dioceses. An anonymous poll was conducted on perceptions of the process and value of each session. The majority of participants found the session they attended ‘very useful’ or ‘quite useful’, Nearly all of the participants found it useful to reflect on the experience of their schools with colleagues and felt that their views were listened to in the session.

Strong support was expressed for the work of the Task Team, with 94% of participants indicating that they believed that the recommendations that the Task Team will make will assist their schools; and that they would like to participate in the process of developing the recommendations. The majority of participants (87%) indicated a desire to attend a follow-up session.

7.3. Phase Three November - December 2021: Drafting the Report on the Sessions with Schools

The report was constructed as a summary of what was said in the sessions, organised thematically. The report was drafted explicitly as a consolidation of the reflections of all schools in their own words as a ‘mirror’ to the schools of their own reflections.

7.4. Phase Four January 2022: Requesting Additions/Corrections to the Report

The intention of the report was not only to reflect the diverse experiences and learning from the participants – but also to use the report as the basis for further engagement with schools. It was therefore considered important to ensure that participants felt that the discussions were correctly reported before broader distribution.

The draft was circulated in January 2021 and the Task Team received two very important additions which enriched the report and were included in the final version.

7.4.1 Gender Identity and Sexuality

The PSC resolution requested the Task Team to make recommendations on discrimination in Anglican Schools in relation to both race and gender. Much of the focus of schools in the ‘listening’ sessions of September and October of 2022, and in the reports of schools on their ways forward, was focused on racial discrimination. There was, however, one response to the request for additions to the December 2021 report on the listening exercise which requested guidance in relation to discrimination on issues related to gender identity.

One respondent focused on the need to address the issue of gender identity and sexuality, and the need for conversations on responding to gender fluidity and ‘identifying on the gender spectrum’. The respondent indicated that these areas are challenging for:

• Boarding schools.
• Dealing with parents (as they often differ in perspective generationally – and if confidentiality applies, if learners request this).
• Responding to requests from students for a change in pronouns and what this means for parents, staff, and peers.
• Managing gender-neutral language in single-sex schools.

The Task Team was grateful for this addition. The PSC resolution which established the Task Team made explicit reference to discrimination on the grounds of *sexuality*, and the addition above greatly enriches this dimension of the report by raising complex dynamics which must be addressed in the processes recommended by the Task Team. The request for guidance above makes specific reference to the issue of transgender, and issues of gender reassignment.

While the South Africa Constitution is clear in relation to protections from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation\(^{17}\), the complex area of L.G.B.T.Q.I.A.+ is a matter on which both society and the Anglican Church are ambiguous. (For ease of reference in understanding this expanding list of abbreviations, the reader is invited to read the footnoted article\(^ {18}\)). This is not only the case in South Africa. A Document published by the Church of England’s Education Office, *Valuing All God’s Children - Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying*\(^ {19}\) indicates that there ‘is a breadth of views held about same sex marriage, sexual orientation and gender identity by Christians and people of all beliefs’.\(^ {20}\) In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education has yet to publish its *Guidelines for the Educational and Social Inclusion of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) in Schools*.

Within ACSA, the Archbishop’s *Commission on Human Sexuality* has yet to report. It is hoped that the report of this commission will provide guidance as schools work on the development of their policies.

These delays in a response to matters of discrimination on the basis of gender issues, do not make it any less urgent. Recommendation 2 of this Task team is explicit in relation to principles related to the ‘duty of care’ for all children.

• We have to be vigilant in ensuring that no child in an Anglican school is hurt by a failure to anticipate and take actions to ensure that there are no acts of intentional or careless discrimination, or systematic marginalisation of individuals or their identity.
• Schools must be uncompromising in taking determined action to support the emotional and social well-being of all children by creating a culture and a set of practices which ‘demonstrate a God of love acted out in the detail of school life’, in which constant links are made between faith, human need, and love of neighbour.
• The guiding principle in school life should be care and respect for the uniqueness and value of every single child in the school’s charge, and in which all children develop a sense of

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\(^{17}\) The Constitution of South Africa asserts that ‘everyone has inherent dignity and the right to be respected and protected.’, and that everyone is equal before the law. The Constitution prohibits the state from unfairly discriminating, directly or indirectly against anyone on grounds including race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, religion, conscience, belief, culture, or language and birth.’


\(^{19}\) https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%20July%202019_0.pdf.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
themselves as significant, unique, and precious individuals with the courage and confidence that flow from that realisation; and where, through the experience, the language and attitude of worship, children learn to worship and so learn their own infinite worth.

The document of the Church of England’s Education Office advocates a similar view. The document indicates that there is an ‘absolute necessity to combat bullying of any type, including HBT21 bullying and to create an inclusive school environment that enables all children and young people to flourish’.22

In addition to social justice, and affirmation of every child, urgency is heightened by their analysis that those who may identify as, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender may become ‘non-communicative, isolated, or particularly badly behaved. If they are treated poorly in schools and colleges this can, in turn, lead to loss of confidence and self-worth, self-harming, and alcohol or drug misuse. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people who are bullied are at a higher risk of suicide, self-harm, and depression’.

The Task Team recommends that further processes be undertaken in 2022 to listen to schools to understand how they are already dealing with discrimination in relation to gender. The Task Team additionally recommends that, as schools prepare for this engagement, bishops should use this is an opportunity to engage schools on this complex matter.

7.4.2 More Robust Conversations are Needed with Regard to Racial Discrimination

Another participant offered a bold, and necessary, reflection which is helpful in ‘pushing the boundaries’ of the learning journey with regard to racial discrimination. Key points from this reflection included:

- We must avoid the process being a ‘therapy session’ for the affected school principals and must create an opportunity for deep reflection on the inability of school leadership to see the hurt of black people under their care, and develop practical solutions/strategies to the hurtful and unwanted discriminatory practices in Anglican schools.
- A leader deeply entrenched in the field of education should not battle with racism, not tolerate it, and not incubate it. Failure to dismantle the foundations of racial practices in schools may be an indication of a lack of capacity to extract ourselves from the cycle of racism.
- This process should not be ‘bereavement gatherings’ for school leaders but be an opportunity for those leaders to receive diversity and leadership training that will help them transform their schools effectively. ‘Talk shops’ can comfort ‘culprits’ and increase frustration for the victims.
- If the Anglican Church is to fundamentally change the current context in their schools, they must challenge the source and derail normative racist conduct in its institutions of learning. There is a need for the introduction of transformation initiatives in line with social justice principles grounded in our human rights culture and the Constitution.
- Anglican Church Schools must use this opportunity to commit to real change projects with measurable goals, timeframes, and outcomes. The Anglican Church should not merely hold a ceremonial or silent partnership role in matters that require their active leadership participation.
- We need solutions that have a material impact on the lives of victims and perpetrators of racism. We have an opportunity to set new transformation standards and goals for schools.

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21 Homosexual, Bisexual and Transsexual.
22 Op cit 19 at page 9.
including curriculum revision, diversity of leadership, and to entrench leadership practices that deeply reflect a new society of the 21st century.

7.5. Phase Five January – February 2022: Broadening Participation and Mapping Ways Forward

The report was shared with Bishops, Chaplains, School Heads, and Chairpersons of Governing Bodies.

7.5.1 Consultation with Chaplains

The consultations in September/October 2021 with Heads of Anglican Schools and members of their senior management were followed by a consultation with School Chaplains in February 2022 in which the specific role chaplains can, or do, play in linking Anglican Schools to Anglican values and practices was explored. Generally, the chaplains that attended reported their deep commitment to infusing Anglican principles of social justice within the school communities, but also their recognition that ‘voice’ was subject to the authority structures of the school and that the relationship with the Head of the School was critical in chaplains fulfilling their role.

One of the areas that needs clarification is how School Chaplains relate to the diocese in which they find themselves, as well as the schools of which they form part. Sometimes chaplains are seen in the school as not being proper teachers, but in the diocese, as not being proper priests. Chaplains communicated a strong call for help and support and a sense of being isolated from the Church. There are some important questions that need answering in this regard. This Task Team is not the body to answer them but would recommend that ACSA and ABESA have further consultations in this regard. The considerations / questions are as follows:

- In the South African context, whilst some parish priests exercise a ministry of chaplaincy in schools associated with their parishes, full-time school chaplains are appointed by the Head of School and licenced for their ministry by the Bishop. These chaplains are salaried employees of the schools, contributing to the school pension schemes, and their leave, as well as other statutory deductions are administered by schools. Is it still legally possible to argue that they are volunteers?
- In light of the above, there are important considerations concerning this two-fold accountability which both School and Diocese would do well to clarify.
- What is the role of the Chaplain in terms of school governance and executive management?
- If chaplains are to be members of the school’s senior executive, what experience and qualifications do they need to fulfil this role?
- Should chaplains be teachers? There is a legitimate difference of perspective between bishops who want their chaplain to be a priest in the school, and the school saying the chaplain will have more ‘credibility’ with the staff if they teach a subject and are seen as peer-professionals.
- If chaplains are seen as educators, what teaching qualifications are necessary to fulfil this role?
- Do the Canons and Constitution of ACSA need to include a description on the role and function of School Chaplaincy and guidance as to the qualifications necessary for School chaplains?

This is an important area where the Church, and in particular the diocesan bishop, could play a critical role is strengthening the potentially positive impact of chaplains.
We would recommend that schools consider requesting chaplains to be members of the school’s senior executive body.

In addition to what has been highlighted, Chaplains also indicated a need for the Church to be more active about issues such as gender-based violence and sexual and gender issues.

7.5.2 Report to Synod of Bishops

The Third Interim Report of Task Team on Discrimination in Schools\(^{23}\) was presented to the Synod of Bishops on the 16 February 2022. It reported on the:

- process of listening to schools in September/October of 2021.
- Finalisation and circulation of the Interim Report.
- request for Schools to share their internal plans going forward.

The discussion with the Synod of Bishops when the report was presented began the process of consultation on the recommendations to be made by the Task Team as outlined in Section 2 above. It did so by tabling and highlighting the following key implications of the process for the Synod of Bishops:

- Schools are not separate from society. We cannot expect schools to resolve issues that are not being addressed in our own work in communities and congregations.
- The resolution of the PSC and the establishment of this Task Team could be seen as a significant opportunity for leadership in an area of mission that is wider than school life. Schools will need this support.
- Addressing school challenges may provide an opportunity for bishops to lead processes within the broader set of stakeholders in the community served by the school. Such processes could examine how similar issues manifest in ‘lives outside of school’. Working with parents and communities could provide a significant opportunity for the Church to play a key role in society on issues of discrimination.
- Bishops might recognise this as an opportune moment to participate in courageous and constructive school-based processes which could enrich the perspectives of stakeholders (parents, teachers, alumni) in other areas of life, faith, and work.
- If Anglican schools can assist all stakeholders to advance their reflective capabilities with regard to discrimination, this could make a contribution to society more broadly than the immediate focus on schools. Schools can be sites of mission and pilots for change.

It also asked the Synod of Bishops to consider

- What does it mean to be a school with both an Anglican, and an inclusive, identity?
- The specific role of Chaplains.
- Synod’s understanding of the mechanisms for ‘influencing’ (exercising moral and spiritual leadership) in Anglican schools.
- The complex issues on which the leadership of the Church needs to be more explicit. (For example, the issue of gender identity and sexuality, and the need for guidance to schools in responding to gender fluidity and ‘identifying on the gender spectrum’.)

\(^{23}\) The third interim report can be accessed on the ACSA website including the response of the Archbishop to a query from the Sunday Times: https://anglicanchurchsa.org/third-interim-report-of-task-team-on-discrimination-in-schools/ (accessed 2 April 2022)
• Key opportunities within the process for bishops to play a leadership role.

The report presented to Synod also provided an indication of the further work and time frames of the Task Team, including that:

• The Task Team re-affirms that responsibility for ongoing change processes must remain located in the relevant governance structures of the church and the schools.

The recommendations made to PSC/Provincial Synod as outlined in Section 2, which closes the work of the Task Team, includes processes for sustaining the work of dealing with discrimination developed with the schools.

7.5.3 Schools and their Executive Structures

The Task Team asked all participating schools to reflect on the ‘mirror’ provided in the report and to share their ways forward after discussion with school stakeholders. The Task Team adopted the approach of requesting the executive leadership of the school to lead the responses of the school community because this is where the ongoing responsibility for sustainability of the journey will remain. Whilst all stakeholders share responsibility in this journey, the primary location to lead and manage is located with the executive leadership of the school.

8. RESPONSES OF SCHOOLS: THEIR WAY FORWARD AND NEED OF SUPPORT

Responses to the ‘way forward’ were requested from schools individually because the Task Team understands that schools have had different experiences of grappling with issues of discrimination and are at different stages of this journey. It is also understood that all schools have committed themselves to an intentional and continually deepening journey of learning and change, and many have already embarked on conscious processes of stakeholder engagement.

Each school, under the leadership of the Head of School, was requested to assist the Task Team by responding to the following questions:

1. What are the areas your school suggests should be included in the recommendations from the Task Team to Synod on how best ACSA can address discrimination issues at Diocesan schools?
2. What supportive role does the school consider could be played by Diocesan Education Structures, the Bishops of the Diocese, and ABESA?
3. How can learning best be shared across schools?
4. What are the views of the following stakeholders regarding the way forward at your school?
   a. staff.
   b. governing body.
   c. parent community.
   d. student body.
   e. alumni.
5. What are the next steps the school is planning on this journey?

Schools were requested to report back to the Task Team on the reflective work and active progress that had been made in response to the consultations - within the framework of certain guiding questions. What follows is a summary of their responses.
8.1. Role of the Anglican Church

(What are the areas your school suggests should be included in the recommendations from the Task Team to Provincial Synod, on how best the ACSA can address discrimination issues at Diocesan schools?)

From the responses it was clear that schools are looking to the church to provide some guidelines on the church’s stance towards many of the challenging issues that are playing out at schools. An important area for consideration would be clarity on the church’s stance in terms of inclusive practice as it relates to its expectations of Anglican schools - based on theological points of reference. To establish common standards across Diocesan and other Anglican schools, the hope is that it might address the following aspects:

- Clarifying the Church’s stance on the acceptance of students of other faiths and how they should be accommodated in relation to expectations around chapel attendance, respect for the ethos and Christian religious observation in Anglican schools.
- Clarifying school accountability to report to the Church complaints of, or investigation into, allegations of discriminatory behaviour - if this is regarded as a necessity. Clarifying the Church’s role in terms of attempting to resolve such issues, while considering the school’s processes.
- Adopting and communicating to its schools and the public a clear stance on all matters of discrimination including race and the perpetuation of racial inequalities (systemic and individual), sexual orientation, difference and identity, and gender fluidity.
- Ensuring that the Anglican Church structures (Bishops and Archbishop) are visible and vocal in their support of their schools fighting the scourges of racism and discrimination based on difference and that there are regular meetings between Bishops and the school communities.
- Training the Bishop’s Representative on Council.

Anglican schools value their identity as independent schools and acknowledge that their Governing Boards are responsible for the governance of their schools. However, some clarity around the expected relationships between the Anglican church and its schools would be useful.

8.2. Role of ABESA

(What supportive role does the school consider could be played by Diocesan Education Structures and ABESA?)

- Establishing an ABESA Toolkit, along the lines of ISASA’s ‘A Guide to Effective School Transformation and Diversity Management’, with a focus on the unique aspects relating to the identity of Anglican schools., where the concept of social justice is at the core.
- Facilitating workshops across and between Anglican schools to focus on diversity in all its forms: class, financial status, gender, patriarchy, privilege, supremacy – in line with Christian teachings.
- Supporting school governors, the custodians of Anglican Schools, with training on “What it Means to be an Anglican School” and the basic precepts of Anglicanism. Possibly design and establish a “Governor’s Manual” – aligned to the existing “Parish Manual” - to serve as a guide and framework for new Heads and governors of Anglican schools.
- Issuing regular bulletins highlighting initiatives and providing advice to common problems. This would be useful and could lead to open debate or the incentive to try something new.
- Facilitating workshops for the wider school community on diversity, inclusion and belonging, in line with Anglican doctrine and principles.
- Publishing a regular newsletter to educate and encourage all staff in Anglican Schools.
- Providing an adaptable Policy Framework on Diversity, Belonging and Inclusion for schools to adopt – to create some consistency across Anglican Schools.
• Engaging with the new ISASA Transformation affinity group SATISA (South African Transformation of Independent Schools Association). This would allow for wider sectorial input and wisdom sharing.

8.3. Role of Schools as a Learning Community

(How can learning in this domain of addressing discrimination best be shared across schools?)

• Sharing experiences and resources. Blogs, articles of interest and other resources could be posted on a specific Anglican Schools Association link on the ABESA website.
• Identifying both external “experts” and internal resources within the collective of schools to consult, advise or possibly even mentor the members of the Transformation and Diversity committees.
• Building an “Online Resources” platform, possibly linked to the ABESA Website, where standard templates for relevant Policies could be posted – to be used or amended at the discretion of schools in relation to their needs or their contexts.

8.4. Stakeholders Views on the Way Forward.

8.4.1 Staff
• Standardize anti-discrimination training at New Staff Orientations.
• Continue staff development programmes. Broaden discussions to all aspects of discrimination including race, gender, sexuality, economic disparity, xenophobia, and learners with special educational needs.
• Deal firmly but sensitively with apathy or resistance to change. Some feel that transformation takes up too much “airtime” at school and interferes with the academic delivery, some are reluctant to let go of old identity and tradition markers. Others feel not enough has been done.
• Some schools have introduced classes on social justice and what it means for everybody to feel a sense of belonging in their schools.

8.4.2 Governing Bodies
Most Governing Bodies have embraced Transformation and Diversity as an imperative for their schools, but some have been more proactive than others. Many have established Transformation and Diversity Committees that are sub-committees of Council, and Transformation and Diversity is a standing item on the board agendas. These Governing Bodies have been open to and supportive of training and sensitisation, and proactive in driving equity at their schools. They have already established whole school strategies that provide clear direction in the important areas of culture, recruitment, environment, admissions, teaching and ethos.

8.4.3 Parent Community
It was reported that reactions of parents varied greatly both between and amongst schools. While there is a feeling from some parents that the historical academic educational role of schools is under threat (as attention is diverted to solving societal problems that are too large to solve at school level), others feel that the rate of transformation is too slow or not given sufficient attention. Some historically privileged parents are struggling with the force and pace of the change requirements. At schools where good progress towards transformation has been made, parents have shown a willingness to be part of the journey.
8.4.4 Student Body
The trigger for the social media campaign that led to the uncovering of hurt, and psychological harm experienced by black\textsuperscript{24} students at our Anglican schools, was student voice. Schools voiced the following:

- “Students wish to be part of the solution going forward. They have therefore been engaged in policy review, discussions around language and the importance of a person’s name, language, and background”.

- A desire of students to action opportunities for greater partnering/interaction between monastic schools to facilitate conversations on gender, sexuality, consent, Gender Based Violence, racism, and cultural diversity.

8.4.5 Alumni
Alumni differed in their input according to the age of the school, the inter-generational experiences, and the historical advantages that were the reality for many who had experienced privilege within and beyond the walls of their schools. For the most part, alumni were cognizant of, and supportive of, the need for change within their schools.

8.5. Schools’ Planned ‘Next Steps’ on the Transformation Journey

Proposed next steps differed according to the nature, history, and identity of the school. Many schools had done a great deal of work prior to the consultations and were continuing along a strategic plan for change. Others were at the beginning of the process and gained direction from the interaction with other schools through the ACSA engagement.

In summary, the steps identified for the ongoing journey were:

- Establishing/revisiting a strategic vision and plan for transformation at each school and monitoring implementation.
- Establishing a Transformation Sub-Committee at Governing Body level to report back on strategic priorities linked to the vision and plan.
- Formulating, adopting, and communicating a strong Position Statement on Racism and Discrimination, Equity and Belonging.
- Creating a Senior Management post within the management structures of the school for Transformation and Diversity (also called Equity and Belonging).
- Continuing to focus on and challenge school traditions that threatened equity and belonging.
- Continuing to re-examine curriculum.
- Intentionally celebrating South African special days and ensuring the National Anthem and African songs and hymns are sung more regularly.
- Creating “safe spaces” for student to go to acknowledge hurt and facilitate healing.
- Continuing to review and update policies.
- Increasing staff diversity.
- Introducing smaller student (tutor) groups, headed by staff, to facilitate targeted discussions.
- Examining the language policies of the schools.
- Continuing with transformation and sensitisation training of all staff.
- Integrating staff functions and becoming consciously more inclusive.

\textsuperscript{24} In the Black Conscious Movement sense.
8.6. Observations of the Task Team

While schools are at different places in their journeys of transformation, all schools have taken positive, forward-moving action. Some previous initiatives have reached a new maturity, new strategic imperatives have been identified and schools have become clearer on the way forward. As microcosms of society, schools affirmed their recognition of their roles in bringing about change, both internally and within the wider communities they serve. They generously shared their positive, proactive responses to challenges associated with the required change – including the addressing of school structures, systems, and cultures to create places where people associated with them might feel a sense of dignity, safety and belonging.

Schools, while valuing their independence, indicated that they would value the support of the Anglican Church in providing a clear frame of reference within which they might comfortably claim their Anglican identity – especially in relation to clarity about the church’s stance on key issues that they face: the nature and extent of inclusion in line with their identity as Anglican schools, as well as the church’s position on LGBTQIA+ and other gender diversity realities. This would provide some alignment with the church they serve, and the comfort of common purpose amongst Anglican schools and their church.

Having experienced challenging times as a site of struggle against historical societal problems relating to the terrible injustices of our apartheid history, Anglican schools have rallied, reflected, adapted, and moved forward positively. They acknowledge that the work is ongoing and needs to remain purposeful and “top of consciousness” and have embraced the role they have to play as centres of community and beacons of hope.

9. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCUSSION ON IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1. A consideration of the Role of Diocesan Structures

Diocesan structures have a role in providing ongoing interaction and monitoring on these issues in governing bodies and through the work of chaplains. The following ‘touch-points’ warrant consideration in understanding and fostering fruitful relationships between dioceses and schools as ‘sites of mission’.

9.1.1 Origins

Did this school begin with the initiative of some sort of educational pioneer, or was it founded by the diocese and seen as part of the mission of God in the area? If so, how is that intention entrenched in their constitutions and how is it preserved?

9.1.2 Law

Many schools have significantly different legal arrangements, and the diocese needs to be aware of this in its dealings.

9.1.3 Constitution

ABESA in its governance document has suggested that the school constitution should be intentionally reviewed periodically in an engagement between school and diocese (or where there are several schools in a diocese, perhaps at a diocesan conference for the purpose). Constitutions should guide Boards and not become dead letters.

9.1.4 Diocesan Synod
Do the diocesan rules require schools to report to Synod? If not, why not? When this is done it should happen in an unhurried manner with opportunity for each school to share its concerns with the wider church and respond to questions. Diocesan Synods have interim bodies such as diocesan councils, and schools should have access to these in case of need.

9.1.5 Diocesan Trustees
These have varying roles according to whether the diocese holds the school properties in trust or not. Diocesan representatives should ensure that annual financials are submitted and properly scrutinised in the diocesan office so that sharing concerns can occur. They are not just for filing but an essential part of reporting and relationship.

9.1.6 Representatives on School Boards
Representatives on school boards may be appointed by synod or by the bishop in each case under a school’s constitution. Care must be taken in selecting these representatives and only those who can attend meetings and apply their minds should be chosen. They should also have a general interest in the school and be willing and able to attend other events and show their face supportively (speech days, for example).

9.1.7 Bishops
In addition to what has been described in the Anglican Project set out in Section 6.1, the pastoral nature of the Bishop’s role as visitor could be described as follows, to:

- provide pastoral support to the school, especially to the head of school and school chaplain, as appropriate.
- foster the link between the school and the diocese.
- encourage and support the expression of Christian beliefs, vision, and values on which the school is founded.
- foster good relationships within the school, and between the school, the local church and wider community.
- encourage religious education, collective worship, and values education by sign-posting staff to appropriate officers, training, and resources.

9.1.8 Beyond the Diocese
While this exercise intends to prioritise the effective care of schools at diocesan level and the formation of suitable support structures, rather than allowing higher-level bodies to interpose, there is a legitimate role at provincial level. This Task Team was initiated by a resolution at PSC and has had a vital role in motivating new thinking and co-ordination; but sustaining that is harder with the long lines of communication at provincial level, than at the level of dioceses. The Archbishop encourages but has no constitutional function outside the Diocese of Cape Town.

Here we must think through ABESA’s role, which seeks to support and animate but not own, manage or control; we do not want to create space for dioceses to off-load responsibility onto ABESA. Yet ABESA has shifted the effectiveness of ACSA’s work in school significantly over its decade of ministry to date.

9.2 A Consideration of ABESA Role
ABESA has a role to play in facilitating ongoing support to schools and encouraging collaboration across schools. This role is not to impose any direction, but to be a partner to schools and, where requested, support or facilitate conversations in order for schools to reach their own conclusions. The principles on which ABESA works include: building and maintaining trust; building and maintain
processes of partnership through conversation; and, rather than giving firm direction, ensuring that these processes support full-ownership by schools of their own decisions, rooted in Anglican values.

In addition to the specific suggestions already made by schools in section 8, there are a range of possibilities that might be explored by ABESA and schools. The actions could be to:

- Support each school which wishes to do so to draw up an acknowledgement charter/confession that is the process of inclusive internal school processes and that is meaningful for their own particular context, and which is revisited over time.
- Appoint a Task Team of curriculum experts from within our schools who will examine current curriculum and propose changes that will address our concerns regarding social and racial justice.
- Develop recommended programmes that will help/equip educators to examine their own prejudice and support them in their God given calling to be educators empowering them to be change agents/reformers within their school communities.
- Meet with the Bishops, Heads of Schools, and Chaplains regularly in their dioceses so as to build a supportive link between the Church and the schools.
- Work with the Bishop’s representatives and chairpersons on the school governing bodies to develop a clear definition of relationship and responsibility around what it means to be an Anglican Church school, particularly with regard to social and racial justice.

10. CONCLUSION AND THANKS

The Task Team is grateful to Archbishop Makgoba and the Church for the opportunity to have participated in its own internal collective learning journey. We appreciate what we have learned from each other, and what we have learned from the schools, and from our interactions with the bishops.

We know that the issues explored in this report have consequence for our schools as institutions, for the quality of citizens that emerge from these schools, and the contribution these students will make in society. There is so much potential to take strides which can transform our institutional lives and become a ‘beacon of hope’, strengthening our positive impact in the world.

Our simple hope is that the processes that we recommend will be vigorous in sustaining a deepening of debate. We know that remaining open to learning and to truly hearing different views in this area is not easy. It requires deliberate engagement in processes which are often painful and cannot be rushed, but which will ultimately bring about healing and wholeness.

We ask that, in these processes, deliberate action is taken to ensure that those who have not yet felt heard are given the opportunity, in safe spaces, to engage more – so that our individual and collective journeys towards wholeness and towards healing can be rooted in our individual and collective acknowledgement of discrimination, in our manifestation of contrition, in taking action, in establishing trust, and thus in finding forgiveness for self and others. This would be the embodiment of Anglican values.