

TACKLING YOUTH VIOLENCE & CRIME IN THE COMMUNITY

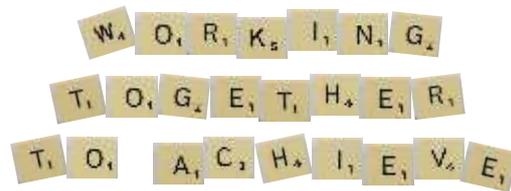
Summary of a meeting of Clergy and Headteachers held on Wednesday 16th September 2019



Sacred Heart School • Camberwell

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The meeting was set up to focus on sharing effective approaches towards the increasing violence and crime around us, how to address the prevailing culture of fear and how we effect positive change and improved behaviour support in our school environments, as well as looking at how the Catholic Church and schools support parents in raising children to resist violence through their faith.



MAIN FINDINGS

Issues

- Increased knife crime in local areas
- Constant threat of gangs and muggings
- Increased drug related issues (county lines) spreading to younger and younger age groups
- Judicial system under-resourced and in danger of not being fit for purpose as regards dealing with the young
- Social Services, in similar position to the police, under-resourced but also dysfunctional
- The working relationship between school and both these support bodies....
- The perceived reduction in effective parenting especially as regards to basic discipline standards and respect for all aspects of society
- Some lack of clergy involvement in schools and, therefore, lacking information about parish members
- Societal issues – poverty, homelessness, poor literacy etc. which we know from first-hand experience are driving some young people in to the hands of the criminals

Schools' Response

1. To build community based institutions working with all stakeholders and ensuring the needs of the 'whole child' are met where possible.
2. An attitude that takes the care and welfare of the child well beyond the school gates:-
 - ◆ Patrols before and after school
 - ◆ Staff employed to mediate and support families with external agencies
 - ◆ Strong pastoral systems that encourage family and community based solutions
 - ◆ Employment of school counsellors
 - ◆ Home visits
 - ◆ A comprehensive PSHE programme
 - ◆ High standards of discipline
 - ◆ Ensure excellent and appropriate qualifications are achieved to enhance confidence and prepare the young for life

SUGGESTIONS

A practical and coordinated approach to the problem



- All schools asked to deliver some of the good practices of the faith schools
- School Liaison Officers to be on call rather than placed in host schools
- More police presence in town centres
- A more robust approach when dealing with the young - if lessons are not learnt early then when?
- A new approach to children's services based at schools (and perhaps GPs and hospitals) e.g. one social worker working with a school to deal with all of its issues. Main advantage, social worker gets to know school and how it works creating a fuller picture of any problem
- Review of judicial system and how it relates to the young. Specialist lawyers, creative deterrents, move away from adult type solutions
- Social media – a huge issue and getting worse by the day. A major shake-up of social media approach to children required

4P's FRAMEWORK

Prevention

Flagging up flashpoints, safety of kids, safe places with all of our schools doing it

Partnership

Strong partnership with heads themselves, with Police at borough level (e.g. Chief Superintendent) and with parishes and local schools

Pastoral Care

Flagging up vulnerable families to local parish, ensure compliance with GDPR

Proportionate Reaction

To improve communication and obtain prosecutions

With grateful thanks to Sacred Heart School and all participants:

- Fr. Victor Darlington, Sacred Heart Church (Chair)
- Bishop Patrick Lynch, Auxiliary Bishop for Southwark (SE Area)
- Dean Fr. Gerry Mulvihill, St Thomas Moore, Dulwich
- Mr Serge Cefai, Headteacher, Sacred Heart School
- Ms Felicity Corcoran, Headteacher, St Michael's Catholic College
- Mr Eamon Connolly, Headteacher, St Thomas the Apostle
- Ms Bernadette Boyle, Headteacher, Bishop Thomas Grant
- Mr Dean Middleton, Student Support Officer