

Facilitators available to help with parenting

IS your parish thinking of setting up a parenting group to help mums and dads in your parish get to grips with their roles as parents?

Setting up such a group may be one of your cluster's Kairos projects, but your congregations may need some expertise to do so. Or perhaps the leaders of your parish's existing group have moved on, and new leaders need to be trained.

Our diocesan Mothers' Union already has two trained facilitators who can help you with this. Alison Hubbard, from Hambledon, is available on the mainland, and Judi Hackleton, from Brighstone, can help parishes on the Isle of Wight.

Contact the MU office on 023-9287 3277 or mothersunion.portsmouth@virgin.net and one of them will contact you.

The MU also runs parenting groups itself, which provide an opportunity for parents to get together and talk about the joys and challenges of bringing up children in a supportive environment.

Typically six to 10 parents meet for six to eight weeks to discuss a range of subjects, including positive parenting, effective communication, building confidence, problem-solving and active listening.

Each group is led by a facilitator - volunteers who have been trained to meet national standards of quality and excellence. They have each gained external accreditation through the London Open College Network.

Delegates urged to release their potential



Readers and clergy deep in discussion during the conference

READERS and clergy have been encouraged to release the potential of all lay worshippers in their pews - for the good of the whole Church.

The occasion was the annual Readers' conference on the Isle of Wight, when 25 incumbents joined 102 Readers and their spouses during the weekend.

The Bishop of Bristol, the Rt Rev Mike Hill, and the Rev Anne Faulkner, from Wroxall, spoke of the need to empower lay people to take responsibility and not leave things to clergy, and to

encourage clergy to loosen the reins and allow the laity some responsibility.

Bishop Mike suggested that there was a perception that 'full-time' equated to 'professional', and 'part-time' to 'amateur', but there are many gifted, professional 'amateurs' in our church not being used.

Another point raised was that the bishop's Kairos process had helped parishioners to look beyond their parish boundaries and organise projects at cluster level. This spread the load and involved more laity too.

School shoots to top of the league

OUR diocese's only church secondary school is celebrating after it was named as the second most improved comprehensive in the country.

Exam results at St Luke's C of E School in Southsea have rocketed over the past four years - from six per cent gaining five GCSEs with grades from A*-C in 2002 to 58 per cent last summer. That improvement could only be bettered by one other secondary school in the country.

The school also performed

well on the 'value added' score - the amount that individual pupils' attainment improves while they are at that particular school. St Luke's came top of a league table of state schools in south-east Hampshire.

Staff said the improvement came partly because of the mix of academic and vocational subjects on offer, and the decision to let each pupil create their own individual curriculum, featuring the subjects they are best at.

Deputy headteacher Paul McKeown said: "The children arrive here with low levels of literacy, numeracy and aspiration. The benchmark for us is not the league tables, which are a government tool, but the fact that these children can leave at 16 and make a success of their lives.

"We've achieved this through courageous leadership, and the governors taking the brave decision to change the curriculum to a diet of academic and vocational qualifications. Many of the children here would have failed under the National Curriculum regime.

"But it's the children who turn a school around, as they are the ones engaging with the curriculum. All we do is find what it is that the child is good at and help that child to excel."

St Luke's also hosted four visitors from Poland last month. Headteacher Renata Rosowska and her daughter, Agata, who teaches English, are both from the



Agata Rosowska (right) from Bielsko-Biala, talks to St Luke's pupil Jess Broderick, 12, over lunch in the school's new café

Mikolaj Rej School in Bielsko-Biala.

They came with Agata Stekla from the Lutheran Secondary School in Cieszyn and the Rev Roman Dorda, pastor of the Lutheran Church in Golesznow in Cieszyn diocese.

They saw lessons and chatted to staff and pupils at St Luke's as part of a five-day visit to our diocese.

They also experienced worship at our cathedral and St Mary's Church, Alverstoke, visited Trinity C of E Middle and Brighstone C of E Primary Schools on the Isle of Wight, went up Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower and visited St Hubert's Church, Idsworth.

The visit came after the chairman of our diocese's board of education, the Ven Trevor Reader, our

children and youth work adviser, Ben Mizen, and our diocesan director of education Canon David Isaac went to Poland last year. A reciprocal visit by children from St Luke's School is now being planned.

Agata Rosowska said: "We were impressed by the vocational subjects on offer at St Luke's, which is completely different to Poland.

"We were also interested to see there is an act of worship every day in assembly - our school is run by the Lutheran Society, but the church has no influence on it."

And Pastor Roman said: "I hope this is the beginning of links between the schools, and between the Anglican church in Portsmouth and the Lutheran church in Cieszyn."

Pompey Chimes

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