

## Ledbury Deanery – Youth and Children’s Work

This is a snapshot report compiled across the Deanery in late 2007 and early 2008. I simply asked a series of questions to each benefice / group of parishes, and allowed people to respond as they felt appropriate. My thanks to those who have provided the information, and above all to those who give so much of their time and energy to work with children and young people in our churches and communities.

The report is tentative, as each response was made in isolation, rather than in interaction with others, and therefore items may have been missed or not given the prominence they deserve. Also, it is quite possible that I may have missed thriving activities across the Deanery.

Any conclusions and recommendations are purely my own, based on over 20 years of working with children and young people in churches across the country (though all the factual comments have been offered by other leaders). I offer the report to Synod.

*Paul Dunthorne, Ledbury – May 2008*

### **I. Church Groups / Ministry**

#### **1. What groups genuinely exist in your Church(es)? For which ages?**

The Churches which responded were Colwall, Cradley, Mathon and Storridge, S<sup>t</sup> Michael’s Ledbury, Bosbury and Tarrington (and Yarkhill). (Not every response covered each section below.) This does not necessarily mean that there is no children’s or youth work in other places in the Deanery, but this is one area where ‘critical mass’ is significant – no work is likely to survive for long with very few children, and it is often better to group the work in certain churches, to ensure strength of numbers and sufficient leadership. For those smaller parishes, ‘giving’ the children they are in contact with to these larger venues may be an act of sacrificial giving, and/or at the same time a great relief, as they are aware of the insurmountable challenges in organising their own activities.

- ❖ Colwall have four groups, for Under 5s, 5-8 years, 9-12 years and 12+.
- ❖ Cradley is seen as the centre of work with children for CMS, as Mathon and Storridge have more elderly congregations, with worship centred on the BCP. J-Zone (formerly Sunday School) runs monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, concurrent with the morning service.
- ❖ Bosbury have a monthly Children’s Church in Bosbury, in the church itself, which caters for all ages from babies to parents and grandparents....and anyone else who would like to come. The session starts at 10am and usually lasts for 1 1/2 - 2 hours – based round an act of worship which includes meditation, singing, Bible stories (including using Godly Play), art, music, drama and other activities, free prayer and silence. The children and the adults take turns in leading different parts of the worship.
- ❖ Tarrington has no specific children’s / youth groups, but other activities.
- ❖ Ledbury has Kids’ Praise for under-5s and parents/carers (monthly, midweek), weekly Sunday School for 0-12s during the service and a Youth Group that meets monthly on Sunday mornings during the service for the older children / younger teenagers. The Fish Tank is the Youth Group for 11s-16s which meets in the Rectory fortnightly on Fridays, and is there for the whole Team (and any others who’d like to come) as well as just for Ledbury.

**Recommendation: To celebrate the work that is going on, and to thank the leaders.**

**Recommendation: All parishes to be aware of the opportunities that exist for children and young people across the Deanery, especially in neighbouring parishes, and to use every opportunity to publicise these in their churches, so families can know what is available locally.**

#### **2. How many children and young people attend?**

- ❖ Cradley: 3-4 at present
- ❖ Colwall: 1-2 under 5s (group not currently active), five 5-8s, eight 8-12s, six 12+

- ❖ Bosbury: 8-12 children, and the same number of adults. Many more for the longer workshops run 3x p.a. (Good Friday, Sunday before Christmas, and Mothering Sunday or All Saints)
- ❖ Ledbury: Kids' Praise 5-18 children and carers. Sunday School – about 30 on the register, but about half attend each week. Fish Tank – about 12.

These numbers are small. While it is absolutely right to celebrate what is going on, and to thank the leaders, we must recognise that the percentage of children and young people attending church groups or activities in any week is painfully small. This means that the generation that is growing is becoming increasingly distanced from the Church as an institution, and also from the Christian story. School RE does not make up this gap; nor should it be expected to. This generation of children is perhaps the third generation for whom church plays no significant part in their lives. Sunday attendance is also culturally more difficult than ever before, with the twin impact of increasing divorce rates (and consequent weekends away with the other parent) and other activities (compare the numbers above to the numbers attending e.g. Ledbury Rugby Club on a Sunday morning).

***Recommendation: in the light of these numbers, each PCC to look seriously at the patterns of life in its parish for families and children, to ensure (i) that every opportunity be taken to make Sunday activities as appropriate as possible, and (ii) to examine the possibility of developing and strengthening activities in the week and/or at other venues (see below).***

### **3. What part do children and young people play in regular services in the Church?**

- ❖ Cradley: *Jimmy's Band* is a small orchestra which accompanies the monthly Family Service (1st Sunday monthly), containing half-a-dozen young people – the majority of the band- are under 16. Family Communion happens monthly on a different Sunday, with plans afoot to include children and young people in reading, leading prayers, participating in presentations, etc.
- ❖ Colwall: Children are servers, give out hymnbooks and service sheets at occasional services, sometimes do the offertory. They play in the orchestra which is usually a monthly occurrence. They lead the prayer and then pass the Peace before they go out to separate activities. There is a group of children in the choir who have a special practice session, on Saturday mornings instead of the main choir's evening practice. Each month there is a 'Parish Praise' service, non liturgical, which is led by a member or group of the congregation and the children devise and lead a "Parish Praise" fairly regularly
- ❖ Bosbury: some attempts have been made to develop the 11:00 service to be more accessible to the families who come to Children's Church – this has met with limited success. On the occasions when this service has included an 'interactive' sermon slot, any children present have been encouraged to join in. There are several teenagers in the choir and amongst the bellringers, some of whom attend church regularly, and couple of whom are servers at the Eucharist, and willingly help or take part in Children's Church and the workshops. Some of the older ones read, and lead intercessions from time to time. Young musicians lead some of the singing from time to time, and the more confident vocalists and instrumentalists take part in the bigger services like Carol Services and Taize.
- ❖ Yarkhill's services are child friendly, and children who attend are involved in some way. In Tarrington, there is a service held in the Community Hall each month (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday), with an informal pattern and linked craft activities. Numbers vary from 2-12. Use of the Community Hall is crucial, in order to have toilets, kitchen and a more flexible space in the building.
- ❖ In Ledbury, children and young people are involved as servers, and in the monthly All-Age service they read, lead intercessions, do the collection and offertory (and opening procession), and also play in the instrumental group that helps lead worship. Other involvement may include drama, presentations and participating in the address. A parents' and children's choir has just been started, rehearsing on Wednesdays and singing with the main choir at All-Age services.

The involvement listed above does not include special services (Harvest, Christmas, Easter etc), where often there is much greater involvement and higher numbers. Recommendations are left until after the following, linked section.

#### 4. How much ministry do children and young people offer to adults?

There is a great danger in church life in seeing children and young people as objects of ministry, rather than the subjects of ministry – those we (adults) *do ministry to*, rather than those we are prepared to *receive ministry from*. Those experienced in work with children and young people will know that this is not the case. Jesus welcomed children, and called his followers to cultivate child-likeness. Children and young people can play just as great a part in the worship and ministry of churches as any other age group: in my experience I have not just seen the usual activities listed above and below, but also children (with adults) participating in prayer ministry (for healing and filling with the Spirit) and evangelism. What do our normal patterns and set-up express about who is active in ministry? When children do exercise ministry, is it genuinely received as equal ministry, or seen as like a school concert / performance?

- ❖ All Churches: see what is listed above.
- ❖ Ledbury: Some of the adults feel they gain from seeing things from a child's perspective in All-Age services.

***Recommendation: PCCs and Church leaders to talk honestly to parents and children about how children perceive their involvement in the Church services and events. Opportunities to be taken to strengthen and broaden involvement, recognising that this is a costly commitment of time.***

#### 5. How child-friendly are the services your churches provide?

The question of worship is one of the most vexed that our churches face, and there are no simple answers. Please note the honest answers given below by those involved with children and young people. The generation gap between young and older is increasing, and preferred worship styles are diverging, not converging. We need to recognise that much of what we traditionally do is alien to an unchurched generation, that includes parents as well as children. [One still just occasionally hears the time-worn logical fallacy that runs something like: 'in my day we used the Prayer Book. There were more children in church then. Therefore using the Prayer Book plainly doesn't exclude children and families'. Wrong!] Yet, the preferred style of many younger adults and children is equally alien to many in our current congregations. Can the twain ever meet, or do we need to develop separate weekly worship activities for different ages / preferences? While this might conceivably just be possible in Ledbury or Colwall, it is hardly possible for the other parishes. Discuss!

Perhaps the hardest issue the Church nationally (and locally) faces is how to present the unchanging Gospel of Christ afresh to a new generation – and how to draw on the strengths of our Anglican tradition without becoming wedded to the past and irrelevant to our communities. Simply changing our pattern of worship will, by itself, never draw children and young people into our churches (at least, not outside the major cities), but failure to address this key question will present a serious blockage to developing our work in this area.

- ❖ Colwall: There is a child-friendly area in the church for them with seats, books and toys. Children are welcomed to all services although one of the 3 regular Sunday services is designated a family service
- ❖ Bosbury: Week-by-week services are not really child-friendly, apart from Children's Church. There is an embryonic area for children and their parents to sit and play during services but it's not really very welcoming or comfortable yet. Hard work goes in to making special seasonal services accessible.
- ❖ Tarrington: The congregation enjoys seeing children in church, but can find the noise overwhelming.
- ❖ Ledbury: All Age Services are child friendly – but leaders don't think that the other standard 9.30 services could be described as child friendly (style of worship, eucharistic nature). The Church is currently preparing children to be admitted to Communion before Confirmation. This should help, and will have implications for the Church's worship. A thorough review of worship is currently being undertaken. The presence of children in the Church gives a positive message – children and families feel welcome at All-Age in particular.

***Recommendation: each parish examine its worship from a mission-shaped perspective (wider than just children and young people). 'The Healthy Churches Handbook' (Robert Warren, Church House Publishing) is of value here.***

## **6. Where are the main growth points, if any, in this work?**

- ❖ Colwall: The current development is in offering preparation for year 4 children onwards to take communion before they have been Confirmed. The service to celebrate the first of these children was scheduled for December 2007.
- ❖ Bosbury: Children's Church (see above) is a model that could be offered to other small parishes. As it very much involves whole families, it may have more of a chance than purely children's/young people's groups, though it doesn't appeal to the 11-18s nearly so much.
- ❖ Ledbury: New families – word of mouth seems to work the best. The Fish Tank for teenagers. More services out in the Community (like the annual Candlemas service). More liaison with the Primary School re publicity. Possible ecumenical developments in Ledbury town. Without new initiatives, a plateau may have been reached.

There are growth points, which need to be celebrated and supported by the whole church. How aware is the PCC and/or wider congregation of these developments. How supportive are they?

## **7. What are the main challenges you face in this work?**

- ❖ Cradley: making contact and evoking response from younger families in the village, who on the whole don't participate in village activities.
- ❖ Colwall: To find enough leaders for the young people's and children's' activities. To keep up the awareness of the church community that children are able to be participants and can be included creatively in the life of the church. To encourage local families to bring their children while being responsive to the great changes of social trends and pressures on family life.
- ❖ Bosbury: Time to offer Children's Church more than once a month. Holding the interest of boys – although currently there is a better balance of boys and girls - and keeping the older ones. Time to take the group to other Christian activities and outings; to do more in depth Bible exploration with the older ones (and the adults!)
- ❖ Tarrington: Not having the slightest idea from one week to the next whether there will be two or twelve children attending.
- ❖ Ledbury: Maintaining everyone's interest and commitment and as key people do move on ensuring that new people are coming in to continue the work. Good publicity. The need for more time and alternative accommodation – but in such away that people still feel welcome and integrated. Managing a larger group with disparate ages, especially with inadequate accommodation for children's work.

The main areas of challenge appear to be: sufficient leadership (for sufficient groups) and adequate accommodation, coupled with the need already observed of meeting the challenges that a changing society brings.

## **8. What solutions have you found to these challenges?**

- ❖ Colwall: Making the children more involved in the regular church activities and not relying on providing completely alternative worship and learning. Keeping a high profile in structures like the PCC and the Ministry Team so that activities are known and can be co-ordinated with other stuff going on in the Parish.
- ❖ Bosbury: Metal-working equipment brought to some workshops has kept the interest of boys. Planning sessions are developing into a time when the leaders have time to 'talk God', to pray and explore the scriptures for themselves – an unexpected way of naturally growing a house-group!

- ❖ Ledbury: The All Age Services – especially parents giving the address. The Candlemas Service at the Primary School. Leaders feel blessed to have identified and been sought out by parents who really want to be involved and have lots of ideas and skills.

Solutions are often there, through the dedication and commitment, and creativity, of the leaders. This needs to be applauded. One factor which needs still to be carefully borne in mind regularly by all PCCs is the question of integration. Leaders of children's work are, almost by definition, creative. If PCCs and clergy are not working closely with leaders, then solutions may develop in ways that may not be those that PCCs would have chosen, and which could potentially widen any gap between children's work and the rest of the Church. (See below)

## 9. What do you hope to see / expect to see happening over the next five years?

- ❖ Colwall: There will be a turnover of children and of adults helping with the children's groups. It looks as though numbers are dropping although this is unpredictable and can reverse itself. The arrival of a new Rector will no doubt bring fresh ideas and opportunities alongside this. There may be a change to the style of intervention that is made with the children. This is about to be brought under discussion
- ❖ Bosbury: More reaching out to other families – both in Bosbury and in the other smaller parishes. Perhaps looking at other times to bring families together – and other venues. Someone to look at the needs of the older children?
- ❖ Tarrington: Discussions about Children and Communion continue and some are sad that more progress is not being made.
- ❖ Ledbury: More groups on a Sunday morning in more suitable accommodation: under 5s, 7-11s and 11+. Bringing back into use upstairs rooms above the choir vestry. Older children becoming more involved with sessions/activities for the younger ones. More family events – such as the Family Christmas Party, carol singing, Christingle Making, Travelling Crib. Continue the summer picnic and go-karting. Family Activity Days? Perhaps with the schools?

This is perhaps the most encouraging section of all. Our leaders are full of hopes and dreams for the future of this work. What can we do to help realise these?

## 10. How well 'staffed' are your youth and children's groups? Is there a problem recruiting, training, supporting and retaining leaders? What is best practice here?

- ❖ Colwall: Very poorly staffed, immense difficulty recruiting, we all support each other quite informally and have regular meetings which are really get-togethers
- ❖ Bosbury: On the whole there is at least one of the more experienced leaders at each session, and some of the newer ones are now more confident and taking more responsibility. There is a fairly extensive list of willing helpers to call on for workshops, but there are Child Protection issues arising from this.
- ❖ Ledbury: There are staffing issues. Fish Tank would be impossible unless the Rector (and Julia) were leaders. Sunday school leaders are happy to do it, and two are teachers anyway. Others are happy to help but don't have much theological knowledge (a list of helpful websites for lessons is being collected). This is a crucial area as many parents either stay with their children, or do not find the main service helpful, and so this is a source of Christian teaching for them as well. The Diocesan Children's Adviser (Norris Boyland) has been wonderfully helpful and supportive in all things.

Do our churches see leadership in this area as one of the most (if not the most) important area in the life of the Church? Why is it so often left to parents to provide the leadership and teaching, and other members of the church so rarely get involved? Do clergy regularly attend or teach in Sunday School? Why (not)? Would this be a good prophetic sign of the importance of this work?

**Recommendation: consideration to be given to Deanery training in leading children's work within Churches.**

**11. Has Child Protection practice been difficult to implement (CRB checks etc)? Any issues arising from this?**

No real difficulties are reported in this area, and all activities seem to have at least one CRB-checked leader. Leaders are rightly aware of the issues in this area. Do all PCCs have a designated Child Protection representative / officer, to work with the Incumbent to handle initially any child protection issues that arise, and to liaise with the Diocesan Officer, Mrs Maria Johnson?

***Recommendation: each PCC to review the list of those currently CRB-checked, to initiate checks where necessary and to appoint a designated person to keep lists of those checked, to review and ensure the correct application of the PCC's Child Protection Policy and to handle initially, with the Incumbent, any child protection issues that arise.***

**12. How integrated is your work into the rest of the life of the Church?**

- ❖ Bosbury: Not as much as leaders would like it to be – few of the families attend other services on a regular basis, and few of the regular congregation come to children's events. The children's work is always displayed in church and contributes to the feeling that 'things happen' in the church – but leaders believe they could draw more attention to it during other services.
- ❖ Ledbury: Becoming more so and Sunday School as a presence is welcomed by most. This is a gradual process, which still has a long way to go, but things have greatly improved from a few years ago.

**13. How much is the presence of children and young people in Church genuinely welcomed by other members of the congregations?**

- ❖ Colwall: Very welcomed although sometimes the noise in church is distracting!
- ❖ Bosbury: Most people are delighted to see youngsters in church – it's so rare to have enough to cause any noise to speak of!
- ❖ Ledbury: This is varied. There has been positive feedback on some of the things that have been done, and some adults do visit the Chapter House at the end of the service to see what the Sunday School has been doing. Others, however, still perceive services with children's involvement as being 'dumbed down', and find the presence of children disruptive to their own worship and contemplation. By no means all appreciate the All-Age service, but probably a majority like to have the children there.

There is clearly some work which still needs to be done in this area. Might Synod members be active evangelists here, stressing wherever possible the importance of children and young people in the life of the Church?

**14. How much money do you spend on this area each year? (Actual amount, and as a proportion of the Church's budget.)**

- ❖ Bosbury: There is a small legacy which is specifically for youth work, and use between £75 - £100 per year. Needs are very unsophisticated, and there are some very creative and artistic people to call upon.
- ❖ Tarrington: Not much spent, but money is not a problem.
- ❖ Ledbury: £200 is the annual Sunday School budget. (In 2006 quite a bit less than this was spent, but more in 2007 and a lot of the time people don't claim when they are purchasing smaller items.) There is a separate budget of £100 for the Fish Tank, which has also just received a grant from the Town's Drug and Alcohol Forum as being a recognised group working with young people.

When he was Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey said, 'Look at the budget of any church and see what it's spending on young people, young adults, Sunday schools and the wider community.'

Compare that to what it's spending on itself, and then you'll get a measure of whether it's declining, growing or standing still.' How do we measure up to that?

It is crucial that the work here is fully funded by PCCs, and that leaders put in claims for all they spend. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, it enables the PCC and the Church to own the real financial cost. Secondly, even if leaders want to pay for things themselves, and don't want to receive money from the PCC, then they can simply give it back to the Church, gift-aided.

***Recommendation: each PCC with work among children and young people to look at their budget for this, with a view to ensuring that this work is properly funded. Leaders to be encouraged to make proper claims for all expenses incurred.***

#### **15. How supportive, genuinely, are the PCCs of work in this area?**

- ❖ Cradley: Support from the congregations and the PCCs is there notionally. Storridge & Mathon both wish these initiatives well, and some of the personnel from those churches are prepared to assist with Cradley initiatives, but there is at present little sign of change in practice to enable these things to happen in the smaller villages, though the possibility of a 'peripatetic' youth 'event' outside Sunday worship has been discussed.
- ❖ Bosbury: To the extent that they're pleased something is happening, but less enthusiastic when it comes to planning more child-friendly (less traditional) services.
- ❖ Ledbury: leaders would like to think they are, though the main practical test of this may be the question of whether proper accommodation for this work can/will be provided. There are probably some areas where there are issues e.g. around traditional vs. family friendly worship, but there is room for compromise and the will seems to be there

PCCs are notoriously busy, and if good and fruitful partnership is to continue to develop in this area, then space may need to be carved out on PCC agendas on a regular basis.

***Recommendation: each PCC to receive regular reports of work in this area, to review it with the leaders and to ask what support is needed that they can give. Areas to look at must surely include accommodation, finance, leadership, training and other practicalities.***

## **II. Work in other Sectors**

#### **16. Do you have any links with uniformed organisations? How strong are these links and what do they amount to?**

- ❖ Cradley: Working towards a quarterly / monthly parade service.
- ❖ Colwall: The local Guides are headed by a church member. They usually come into church as a group each year.
- ❖ Bosbury: No.
- ❖ Tarrington: No
- ❖ Ledbury: Guides and Brownies attend Mothering Sunday and Christingle. Scout and Cub banners sometimes appear on Remembrance Sunday. There are no formal links.

#### **17. Schools – what schools are there on your 'patch', and what links do you have with them? (State schools and private schools.)**

- ❖ Cradley: Cradley Primary is a Church school, and visits the Church regularly for services. The Rector leads Collective Worship.
- ❖ Colwall: We have 2 independents and one Local Authority Primary. The outgoing Rector was closely linked as Chairman of Governors. and did a weekly assembly at the Primary. One of the

Independents has its own services at the church with which the Children's Ministry Team is not involved.

- ❖ Bosbury: 2 primary schools – Ashperton County Primary, and Bosbury CofE (VC). Clergy have good links with both, through Collective Worship and governing bodies.
- ❖ Much Marcle: Much Marcle CofE Primary School, where clergy take weekly collective worship, and the Chair of Governors is a Churchwarden from Yatton.
- ❖ Ledbury: There are good church links with all the Schools. The Rector is chair of governors at Eastnor Parochial Primary School (VC), and he and others lead Collective Worship. He is also a governor at Ledbury Primary, and leads Collective Worship regularly (though not weekly). An annual All-Age service takes place in the Primary School at Candlemas. Howard Mayell is a governor at John Masefield High School, and involved in its general work.

#### **18. How many people are involved in taking assemblies, or is it just clergy?**

- ❖ Cradley: just the Rector, though the Headteacher of Cradley is ordained NSM and licensed in a neighbouring benefice.
- ❖ Colwall: not just clergy.
- ❖ Ledbury: not just clergy, but mainly so. Embryonic plans exist to develop this work ecumenically, so teams of lay and ordained can go into schools more regularly and with more variety of approach.

#### **19. How many church members are school governors / otherwise active in schools?**

- ❖ Colwall: Unsure – at least 3.
- ❖ Cradley: Half the governors are church members.
- ❖ Bosbury: One church member is a governor, who also helps hear children read. Some of our Children's Church parents are very active within Bosbury School.
- ❖ Ledbury: Rector is only church member on the governing body at Eastnor, though the Headteacher has joined the PCC in order to give regular reports of the work of the School. One other church attender is a governor at Ledbury Primary, and lots of Church members go into the School to help with reading etc.

#### **20. What about Christian clubs at School – any? Success / reach?**

- ❖ Colwall: None at Primary School. A Choir started there a few years ago but not successfully
- ❖ Cradley : X-Stream is an after-School Club with 6-8 Junior age children, run weekly on a Christian theme by members of Cradley (& Malvern) Church at Cradley School. A school choir of 8-9 children (years 1-2) meets weekly after school, run by members of the congregation, and takes part in occasional services.
- ❖ Much Marcle: JAM Club runs after school, run by two parents, attracting about 25 children of different ages through the School.
- ❖ Ledbury: Little Fishes club runs weekly after school at the Primary School for 12-15 pupils, run jointly by Christian staff and members of the Church. JMHS has a prayer group.

Given what has been reported above about the difficulties of work on Sundays, this is a crucial area – not to replace All-Age worship and Sunday Schools, but as a complement to it, reaching children and young people who do not attend church. We have a large percentage of Church Schools in the Deanery, and good relationships with the County Schools, and therefore have a wonderful opportunity to make a real difference here. Schools need to be invited to Church regularly, for children to be used to the building. But more importantly, we need to take the Church to the Schools – to be involved in whatever way we can to support the schools, help with RE and other activities and lead collective worship. After-school clubs have been very successful here and elsewhere.

There is a real opportunity here to work ecumenically and across the Deanery, to set up properly-trained and resourced teams to develop the work in Schools, where the door is usually open, and where children and young people can be reached in much greater numbers than is currently likely to happen on Sundays in church.

**Recommendation: each PCC, where there is a school in the parish, to review links with that School, with a view to developing and strengthening such links.**

**Recommendation: consideration be given to Deanery training in relating to schools, setting up after-school clubs and leading collective worship at all Key Stage levels. Perhaps in partnership with the Hereford ACTS2 scheme, and/or in conjunction with Scripture Union. A bid for Diocesan money (currently available) could be made.**

**21. 'Detached' youth / children's work - is there any of this going on across the Deanery?**

None that any are aware of.

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## **Summary of Recommendations**

1. To celebrate the work that is going on, and to thank the leaders.
2. All parishes to be aware of the opportunities that exist for children and young people across the Deanery, especially in neighbouring parishes, and to use every opportunity to publicise these in their churches, so families can know what is available locally.
3. In the light of numbers, each PCC to look seriously at the patterns of life in its parish for families and children, to ensure (i) that every opportunity be taken to make Sunday activities as appropriate as possible, and (ii) to examine the possibility of developing and strengthening activities in the week and/or at other venues (see below).
4. PCCs and Church leaders to talk honestly to parents and children about how children perceive their involvement in the Church services and events. Opportunities to be taken to strengthen and broaden involvement, recognising that this is a costly commitment of time.
5. Each parish to examine its worship from a mission-shaped perspective (wider than just children and young people). 'The Healthy Churches Handbook' (Robert Warren, Church House Publishing) is of value here.
6. Consideration to be given to Deanery training in leading children's work within churches.
7. Each PCC to review the list of those currently CRB-checked, to initiate checks where necessary and to appoint a designated person to keep lists of those checked, to review and ensure the correct application of the PCC's Child Protection Policy and to handle initially, with the Incumbent, any child protection issues that arise.
8. Each PCC with work among children and young people to look at their budget for this, with a view to ensuring that this work is properly funded. Leaders to be encouraged to make proper claims for all expenses incurred.
9. Each PCC to receive regular reports of work in this area, to review it with the leaders and to ask what support is needed that they can give. Areas to look at must surely include accommodation, finance, leadership, training and other practicalities.
10. Each PCC, where there is a school in the parish, to review links with that School, with a view to developing and strengthening such links.
11. Consideration to be given to Deanery training in relating to schools, setting up after-school clubs and leading collective worship at all Key Stage levels. Perhaps in partnership with the Hereford ACTS2 scheme, and/or in conjunction with Scripture Union. A bid for Diocesan money (currently available) could be made.