

National Institute for Christian Education Research

An Introduction



Faculty of
Education





A message from the Dean

The Faculty of Education is delighted to welcome the National Institute for Christian Education Research (NICER) as a dedicated research centre of the Faculty.

NICER was established in 2005 as an initiative of the Vice-Chancellor's office. A number of successful research projects were undertaken,


with particular focus on reviewing the performance of church schools. A major grant from the Templeton Foundation then led to the establishment of the Learning for Life research programme on Character Education.

Following the Faculty's considerable success in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, and taking into account its strong commitment to Christian Education, I am very pleased that the decision was taken to incorporate NICER fully into the Faculty of Education. Professor Trevor Cooling was appointed as Director in 2010, succeeding Professor James Arthur who had moved to be Head of the School of Education at Birmingham University.

2012 is the Jubilee of the foundation of Christ Church as a Church of England teacher training college. This is a particularly opportune moment for NICER to launch its new research project investigating the impact of Christian ethos on teaching and learning in schools.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "John Moss". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr John Moss
Dean of the Faculty of Education

A photograph of a man in a grey shirt leaning over a desk, smiling and looking at a group of students. The students, including a young man and a young woman, are looking down at something on the desk. The background shows a classroom with bookshelves.

NICER conducts research and development work (knowledge exchange) with the aim of supporting the ministry of Christians working in education.

Our goals

To undertake research and knowledge exchange that:

- Strengthens the contribution of Christian faith to the public understanding of education;
- Energises the mission of Church and other Christian schools;
- Enables Christians working in education to be more effective;
- Provides rigorous evidence for policy makers;
- Develops a theology of publicly-funded education.

Knowledge exchange and research

Our knowledge exchange projects

Leadership in Christian schools

Working with Oasis Community Learning on the implementation of an inclusive, Christ-centred ethos in their academies.

Introducing trainee teachers to issues of faith and education

Working with the Faculties of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University and Liverpool Hope University developing materials for use in the professional studies programme for trainee teachers to support them in dealing with issues of faith and education in the classroom.

Resources provision

Working with Transforming Lives (an initiative run by The Stapleford Centre, Nottingham) producing academically credible resources for teachers and student teachers. These include a website on a Christian approach to Teaching and Learning and a dedicated YouTube channel on faith and education.

Continuing Professional Development

Working with the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University, developing the Professional Doctorate in Christianity, Faith and Education.

Christian Ethos Schools

Working with Church of England dioceses and other school and academy sponsors providing short courses for teachers.

Our research projects

The impact of a distinctively Christian approach to teaching and learning

In 2012, NICER begins a two-year research project in partnership with the Centre for Christian Education at Liverpool Hope University assessing the impact of a distinctively Christian approach to teaching and learning. This will be funded by charitable trusts, including the Jerusalem Trust and the Hockerill Educational Foundation.

The legitimacy of a religiously-informed approach to education in a publicly-funded system

In 2010, the public policy think tank Theos published the report *Doing God in Education* written by Trevor Cooling. This report was subsequently the subject of a debate at the Royal Society of Arts (February 2011) a symposium at the British Education Research Association (September 2011) and a feature in the Times Educational Supplement (October 2011). The report will also be the focus of a symposium sponsored by BERA at the American Education Research Association conference in Vancouver (April 2012) and is under review as the focus for a special edition of the *Oxford Review of Education* (2012).

International partnerships

NICER is currently working with two international partners:

- Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA
 - The Anglican Diocese of Sydney, Australia.
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Meet the team



Professor Trevor Cooling Director

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Trevor has been active in education for over 30 years as, at various times, a classroom teacher, head of Religious Education in a secondary school, chief executive of The Stapleford Centre (a Christian education charity), Principal Lecturer in Theology at the University of Gloucestershire, curriculum developer, author, government adviser, and schools adviser for the Church of England Diocese of Gloucester.

He has a PhD in Religious Education from the University of Birmingham, although his first degree is in Biology. He has written widely on education in both books and journals. In 2008 he was the Travelling Scholar for the Australian Anglican Schools Network, visiting schools and working with teachers in the six states and has subsequently regularly worked with schools and teachers in Australia.

He is co-editor of the *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* and directed the research project *Mapping the Field: a review of the current research evidence on the impact of schools with a Christian ethos* (Theos 2009). He is well-known as the developer, with his wife Margaret, of the widely used Concept Cracking approach to teaching Christianity in RE. Trevor currently serves as Treasurer of the RE Council of England and Wales.



Associate Researchers:

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