



The Student Voice Project
(a primary schools attitude survey)

**Publications Arising from the St Mary's Centre Annual Primary Schools
Attitude Survey within Church in Wales schools.**

Factors shaping prayer frequency among 9- to 11-year-olds

Francis, L. J., ap Sion, T., Lankshear, D. W., & Eccles, E. L. (2019). Factors shaping prayer frequency among 9- to 11-year-olds. *Greek Journal of Religious Education (GjRE)*, 2, 39-52.

Abstract

This paper begins by reviewing the evidence from international research concerning the personal and social correlates of prayer frequency during childhood and adolescence. Overall these data continue to support the view that young people who pray not only report higher levels of personal wellbeing but also report higher levels of pro-social attitudes. These findings raise a research question of particular relevance within church schools regarding the factors that predict higher levels of prayer activity among students. The Student Voice Project offers data that can illuminate this research question. Among the 3,101 9- to 11-year old students who participated in the project 11% prayed daily, 9% at least once a week, 32% sometimes, 11% once or twice a year, and 37% never. The present paper tests the power of four sets of predictor variables to account for individual differences in prayer frequency among these students: personal factors (age and sex), psychological factors (using the three dimensional model of personality proposed by Eysenck), church attendance (self, mother, and father), and family discussion about prayer (mother, father, and grandparents). Multiple regression analyses identified the discussion of prayer with the mother as the single most important predictor. These findings locate the development of the practice of prayer within the home, even more than within the church.

Sustaining churchgoing young Anglicans in England and Wales: Assessing influence of the home

Francis, L. J., Lankshear, D. W., Eccles, E. L., & McKenna, U. (2019). Sustaining churchgoing young Anglicans in England and Wales: Assessing influence of the home. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*.

Abstract

Responding to the problem facing the Church of England, as identified by the Church Growth Research Programme, regarding sustaining churchgoing young Anglicans, and also responding to the Renewal and Reform agenda to address this problem, the present study discusses the roles of three agencies in delivering effective Christian education and Christian formation: local churches, local schools, and the home. Building on a fruitful stream of research within Australia and the UK, the present study drew on two samples of young Anglicans: 2,019 9- to 11-year-old students attending church primary schools in Wales, and 2,323 13- to 15-year-old students attending church secondary schools mainly in England. The data demonstrated that young Anglicans who practised their Anglican identity by attending church did so primarily because their parents were Anglican churchgoers. Moreover, young Anglican churchgoers were most likely to keep going to church if their churchgoing parents (especially mother) talked with them about their faith. The implications from these findings, for an Anglican Church strategy for ministry among children and young people, is that alongside resourcing local churches and promoting deeply Christian schools, it may also be wise for the Church to invest in the education and formation of churchgoing Anglican parents.

Keywords: Anglican, churchgoing, schools, churches, parents

Monitoring attitude toward Christianity among year 5 and year 6 students attending Church in Wales primary schools

Lankshear, D. W., Francis, L. J., & Eccles, E. L. (2018). Monitoring attitude toward Christianity among year 5 and year 6 students attending Church in Wales primary schools. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*, 22, 112–127.

Abstract

This study argues that assessment of student attitudes provides insight into the culture and climate of schools. The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was employed to explore the Christian culture and climate of Anglican church primary schools within the state-maintained sector across Wales. The analysis drew on responses from 1,899 students from year 5 and year 6. The data demonstrated that the majority of students held a positive attitude toward Christianity, that female students held a more positive attitude than did male students, and that a significant decline in positive attitude toward Christianity took place over the two year groups.

Keywords: church schools, primary schools, religion, student attitudes

How students perceive attending Church in Wales primary schools : a psychometric assessment of Section 50 inspection criteria

Francis, L. J., Lankshear, D. W., & Eccles, E. L. (2018). How students perceive attending Church in Wales primary schools: a psychometric assessment of Section 50 inspection criteria. *Research in Education, 102*, 2-12.

Abstract

A sample of 4581 year 4, year 5 and year 6 students (8–11 years of age) attending Church in Wales primary schools completed six short scales designed to operationalise the Section 50 inspection criteria concerning aspects of the distinctiveness of Church school ethos and concerning school worship. The data demonstrated the internal consistency reliability of the six measures and showed more positive attitudes to be associated with being female, being younger, and attending Church. Overall, the students displayed positive attitudes toward school ethos, toward school experience, toward school teachers, toward relationships within school, and toward school and environment. Attitude toward school worship was less positive.

Modelling the effect of worship attendance and personal prayer on spiritual well-being among 9- to 11-year-old students attending Anglican church schools in Wales

Francis, L. J., Fisher, J., Lankshear, D. W., & Eccles, E. L. (2018). Modelling the effect of worship attendance and personal prayer on spiritual well-being among 9- to 11-year-old students attending Anglican church schools in Wales, *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 23, 30-44

Abstract

This study employs a modified form of the Fisher 16-item Feeling Good, Living Life measure of spiritual well-being (assessing quality of relationships across four domains: self, family, nature and God) among a sample of 1,328 students drawn from year five and year six classes within Church in Wales primary schools, alongside measures of frequency of worship attendance and frequency of personal prayer. The data demonstrate frequency of personal prayer is a much stronger predictor than frequency of worship attendance in respect of spiritual well-being. This finding is consistent with the view that personal prayer is a key factor in the formation of individual spirituality.

Keywords: Spiritual well-being, prayer, church attendance, psychometric analysis

Engaging the Student Voice in Dialogue with Section 50 Inspection Criteria in Church in Wales Primary Schools: A Study in Psychometric Assessment

Lankshear, D. W., Francis, L. J., & Eccles, E. L. (2017). Engaging the Student Voice in Dialogue with Section 50 Inspection Criteria in Church in Wales Primary Schools: A Study in Psychometric Assessment, *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 26, 237-250

Abstract

The inspection criteria for schools with a religious character within the state-maintained system in England and Wales require the sponsoring body to report on aspects of the distinctiveness of the school ethos and on school worship. This article argues that taking into account the student voice in these areas could enhance the inspection process. Findings are reported for a pilot study conducted among 1,899 students between ages 9 and 11 years, attending year-five and -six classes within Church in Wales primary schools. On the basis of this pilot study, six short scales were constructed to assess student attitude toward: school ethos, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school environment, and school worship. The data reported satisfactory internal consistency reliability for each of the six scales. The scales are recommended for further application.

The internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 8- to 11-year-old students in Wales

Francis, L. J., Lankshear, D. W., Eccles, E. L. (2017). The internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 8- to 11-year-old students in Wales, *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 20, 922-929

Abstract

The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was designed in the mid-1970s to assess individual differences in attitude through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood from the age of 8 years upwards. This study examines the internal consistency reliability, factor structure, and construct validity of the instrument 40 years later among 1511 year 4 students (8–9 years), 1544 year 5 students (9–10 years), and 1526 year 6 students (10–11 years) in Wales attending Church in Wales voluntary aided and voluntary controlled primary schools. The data support the internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the instrument among the age range and commend the instrument for continued use in research.

Keywords: Attitude toward Christianity, children, Wales, psychology of religion

**Assessing student attitude toward Christianity in Church in Wales primary schools:
does aided status make a difference?**

Francis, L. J., Lankshear, D. W., Eccles, E. L. (2017). Assessing student attitude toward Christianity in Church in Wales primary schools: does aided status make a difference?, *British Journal of Religious Education*.

Abstract

As a consequence of the 1944 Education Act church schools were given the choice of opting for voluntary controlled status or for voluntary aided status. In voluntary aided status the Church had more control but carried greater costs. Within England and Wales this distinction is still maintained. This study measures the attitude toward Christianity of 4581 year 4, 5 and 6 students (8- to 11-years of age) attending 87 Church in Wales primary schools, and compares the responses of 1678 students attending controlled schools with the responses of 2903 students attending aided schools. After controlling for sex, age and frequency of church attendance, voluntary aided status is associated with a more positive attitude toward Christianity. In other words, aided status does make a difference to the attitudinal dimension of students' religiosity.

Keywords: Church schools, Wales, student attitudes, Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity