

# COURAGEOUS ADVOCACY

## Summary Document

[180521 Courageous Advocacy \(final\).pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

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Courageous Advocacy entered the sphere of Church of England Education in the 2018 SIAMS Schedule. The area was highlighted as a part of strand three, Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy. The courageous advocacy document was released to support understanding in this area, not to meet SIAMS criteria, but to explore how social action is approached and prioritised within a school community. Also, how this action is considered alongside, or even seemingly in contrary to the needs of the school. It is not simply charity work, but a profound response to a concern for justice. The document makes reference to the quote from the former Archbishop of Recife in Brazil, Dom Helder Camara:

'When I feed the poor they call me a saint, but when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist'.

The document makes the key point that this asking why is a key Christian response, however, in asking why, the realities of the world's struggles can provoke feelings of depression or anxiety and so this approach should be focussed on hope and aspiration.

The definition of courageous advocacy in the document is 'referring to the act of speaking out against an issue of injustice, often on behalf of those whose voice is not heard' It involves a move from being informed and knowing to saying and doing. (Courageous Advocacy, May 2021).

The document concludes that the flourishing of pupils must involve developing a concern for the flourishing of others and this should not be restricted to the walls of the school.

The following is a synopsis of the key ideas found in the three sections of the document. Further reading is also contained within the documents.

## **Section 1: A theological basis for courageous advocacy**

This section outlines the scriptural underpinning of the concept. This provides a common thread throughout the Old and New Testaments. Specific focus is given to the example and teachings of Jesus. Reference is made to Martin Niemoller and the context of his courageous advocacy teaching in 1930's. Connections are made to the key principles of the Church of England Vision for Education.

1. In what ways are global citizenship in education and courageous advocacy integral to human flourishing?
2. If our vision for human flourishing includes a vision for opening pupils' eyes to the wider world, how might that inform decision about spending, curriculum, collective worship, opportunities for social action, engagement with charitable organisations...?
3. When we pray, 'your kingdom come', what are we doing to look beyond ourselves for opportunities to work for a fairer and more joyful world?

## **Section 2: Courageous advocacy in schools: Educating for Hope and Aspiration**

Character and moral development is supported by a school vision that is 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' (2016). Courageous advocacy begins with leaders who are called, connected and committed (Called, Connected, Committed: 24 Leadership Practices for Educational Leaders: 2019).

Courageous advocacy explores the causes and injustice not simply the need, moving beyond fundraising to ask questions of why? and what? This provides an approach to teaching in this area in a way that supports, empowers, considers personal actions and provides opportunity for depth and reflection.

1. Where in your school curriculum do you explore injustice? Is this done in a planned and progressive way or ad hoc?
2. Do you unintentionally present a 'victim' narrative of injustice?
3. Do you present simple solution of give pupils the skills to explore?
4. How do you avoid unintentionally reinforcing negative stereotypes, and assumptions about peoples? How might your approach be balanced?

## **Section 3: Courageous Advocacy – some practical advice**

This section identifies steps in an approach to this area; identify, investigate, solutions, who can change, persuade those with power with change. This process should encourage, empower, equip and enable young pupils. It should not be political, directive, seek simple solutions, be unthinking or reactionary, limite din perspective or breach legal/health and safety guidance.

1. How do you enable pupils to go beyond a sense of compassion to a concern for justice? How do you structure opportunities for pupils to talk about, discuss and challenge injustice and inequality?
2. Do you give pupils regular opportunities to engage in social action projects that they themselves have identified or do you direct or select?
3. How comfortable are you with the idea of pupils 'speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves' and the action being driven by pupils?