

Young people can be gamechangers



Our schools adviser **Sue Bowen** tells us about the project our education team has devised for 2024

THE meaning of the word 'gamechanger' comes from 'the ability of a player of a team sport, who is brought on to the field to alter the outcome of a game.'

If something is truly game-changing, it has a critical effect, usually making the difference between one thing happening and another. So, if being a gamechanger captures the concepts of transformation, innovation, and disruption, then I think I know the very best people for the job – children and young people.

Children want to change the world. I only have to start a conversation about climate change with a group of young people to see the passion, energy and determination they have to make a difference.

Our diocesan education team's annual project this year, 'Gamechangers', seeks to harness this enthusiasm and to give children and young people opportunities to become agents of change.

The project will see children learning about individuals and groups who have made a difference to the world – whether in the field of sport, the arts, in social justice or conservation. It builds on projects in previous years that have seen our schools focus on issues such as conservation, mental health and the African value of shared

community via Ubuntu.

It looks at the difference made by characters in the Bible, and at Jesus as the ultimate gamechanger, both during his time on Earth and today.

'Young people have passion, energy and determination to make a difference'

As the 2024 Olympics approach, the project will look at game-changers in the sporting world and how the actions of individuals have sought to rectify the un-level playing field between rich and poor countries, men and women, and athletes from diverse cultures.

It will look at the growth of the Paralympics and the ways in which sport can unite people. Most of all, the project is an invitation to engage in a gamechanging endeavour.

A brochure containing information and activities has been produced to inspire and enthuse, and you can find it at www.portsmouth.anglican.org/gamechangers.

It focuses on living and using our God-given gifts and skills for the good and for benefit of individuals, families, local communities and

society at large. The booklet includes worship ideas, film links, RE resources and book recommendations.

Designed for both schools and parishes, the Gamechangers project is a demonstration of living out a commitment to 'Serve The Common Good' and to be 'courageous advocates' – both phrases integral to the Church of England's Vision for Education.

Many schools have already started work. I am particularly grateful that this year our church secondary schools, Charter Academy in Portsmouth, Christ the King College in Newport, and The Bay School in Sandown, have welcomed the project. Secondary students will play a role in the culmination of the project in celebratory services for school leavers at Portsmouth Cathedral in July.

Please share this project, the booklet and this vision with other Anglican parishes and clergy, in the diocese and beyond.

Equally, there are community schools and other denominations who enjoy using ideas from our diocese's education team – both locally, across dioceses in England, and indeed, churches and schools in the USA and our World Partner Provinces – so do share it widely in contexts where you have influence.