

# WHAT REALLY MATTERS ABOUT TEACHER EDUCATION AT CATHEDRALS GROUP UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES?



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## VOLUME 1: THE FINAL REPORT

National Institute for  
Christian Education Research



The Cathedrals Group is an association of sixteen universities and university colleges with Church foundations. It is the only grouping in the UK higher education landscape based on ethical principles informed by faith-based values. Members share a common faith heritage and a strong commitment to values such as social justice, respect for the individual and promoting the public good through our work with communities and charities.

Within Cathedrals Group institutions there is a strong commitment to providing a high quality education for students, supporting personal and spiritual development within a challenging learning environment.

Our faith-based values:

- Contribute to a 'whole person' student experience
- Support a positive working environment for staff
- Link with research and knowledge exchange activities, and
- Shape our partnerships and community engagement.

Our member institutions make a significant contribution to the intellectual, cultural, social, spiritual and economic life of the communities they serve.

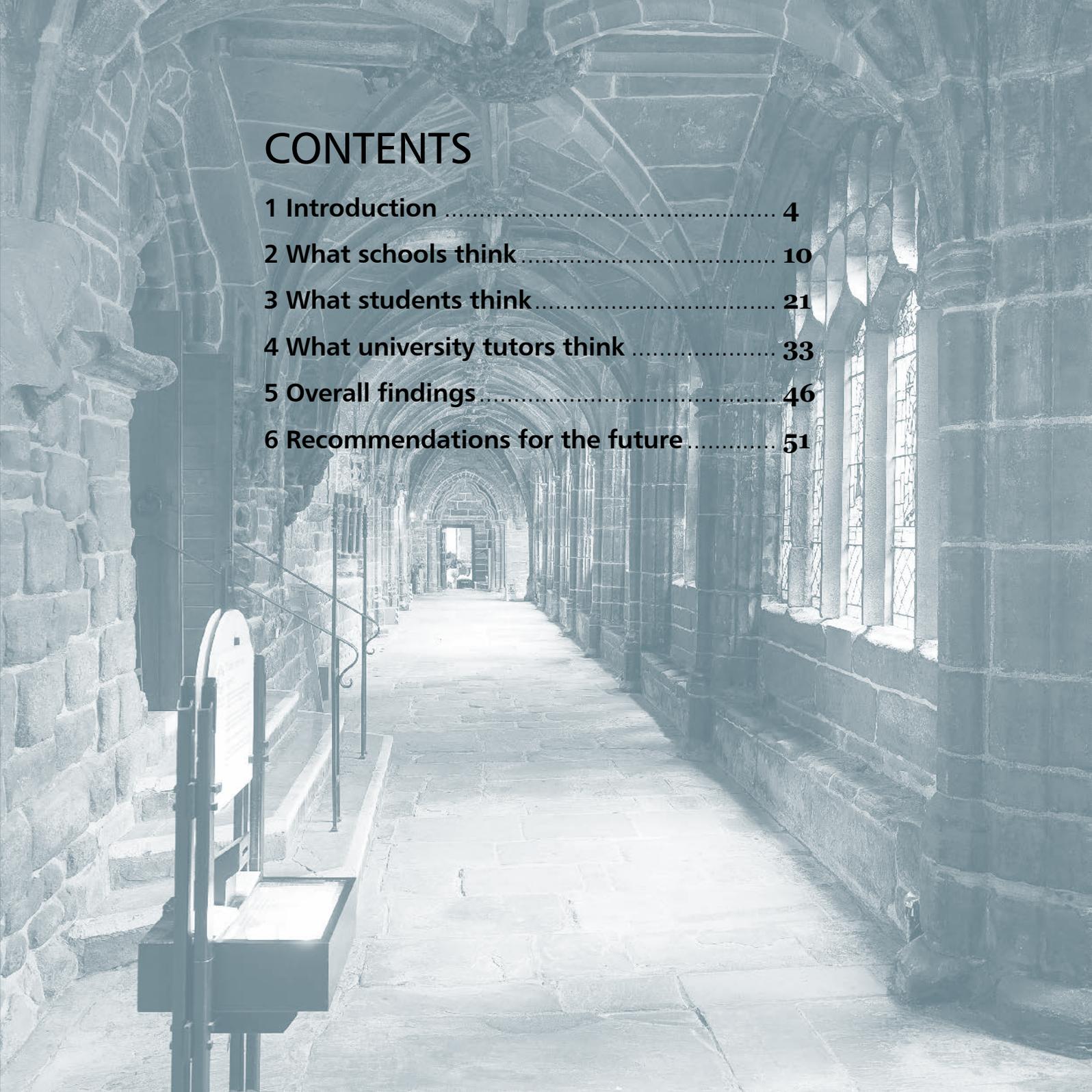
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A long, arched stone corridor with a stone floor and a metal railing on the left side. The corridor is made of large, rough-hewn stone blocks. The ceiling is a series of pointed arches supported by a central rib. On the right side, there are windows with decorative tracery. The floor is made of large, flat stone tiles. A metal railing with a curved top runs along the left wall. In the foreground, there is a small, dark-colored structure, possibly a bench or a display case, with a white sign on top. The overall atmosphere is that of a historic, well-preserved building.

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# 1. Introduction

An investigation into [perceptions of] the features of Christian foundation universities' Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes that are particular to the university's Christian foundation.

We are grateful to the Cathedrals Group of Universities and Colleges, for funding the first stage of this project and the Church of England University and College Fund for funding the second stage, through grant funding.

This report contains the outcomes of the research which took place between November 2016 and January 2018. A separate document, *What really matters about teacher education at Cathedrals Group universities and colleges? Volume 2: The Case Studies*, provides profiles of the findings from the five different institutions. This is the substantive report.

The aims:

1. To investigate why ITE trainees choose Christian foundation university teacher training programmes
2. To investigate why schools choose Christian foundation universities as training programme partners
3. To investigate what Christian foundation universities claim is particular to their Christian foundation, what is particularly or deeply Christian about their ITE provision with a focus on:
  - the underpinning values
  - the content and methodology of ITE training
  - how trainees are supported and challenged in the partnership aspects
4. To investigate what Christian foundation universities, ITE trainees and partnership schools claim about ITE trainees at the point of qualification, that is particular to the institutions' Christian foundation.

This report consists of three elements. The project outline offers an overview of the intervention and how it was implemented. Sections 3 to 6 include the Investigators' preliminary remarks, and the findings and recommendations of the NICER core research team. (Dr Bowie, Dr Hulbert and Dr Casson). The team designed the interview questions and the online questionnaires (Dr Hulbert and Dr Casson). The detailed quantitative data analysis and data reports were produced by Dr Hulbert. Dr Hulbert also produced 15 confidential institutional profile reports (for school data, university teacher education data and student teacher data), as well as the merged sector quantitative elements in this report. Interviews were carried out by Dr. Bowie and Dr. Casson, sometimes with the help of a local institution researcher. Liz Melville transcribed the interviews.

The wider research team who arranged interviews with staff, students and schools and facilitated online engagement included members of staff from the participating universities:

Dr James Holt (University of Chester),

Dr Maria James and Mary Benton (St Mary's University)

Dr Pam Jarvis, Edward Podesta and Liz McGuire (Leeds Trinity University)  
Dr Glenn Stone (University of Chichester).

They also authored the case studies of their respective institutions in the separate report.

## Project Outline

The project, *What really matters about teacher education at Catbedrals Group universities*, sought to understand better how teacher education staff, partnership schools and student teachers perceived their teacher education institutions and programmes including specific reference to the Institution's Christian foundation.

The National Institute of Christian Education Research at Canterbury Christ Church University led the research project.

The project took place over two years with a pilot and qualitative phase and a quantitative phase.

Altogether, schools, students and university teacher educators from 5 universities were involved in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the project:

- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Chester University
- Chichester University
- St Mary's University
- Leeds Trinity University

In addition Bishop Grosseteste University participated in the quantitative phase of the project.

## Investigators' Remarks

Initial teacher education has gone through an enormous change over the last fifteen years with the emergence and mainstreaming of school-led provision. Historically the vast majority of teachers were trained in higher education institutions, many of them with a Church or Christian foundation. In the current context, teacher education is now an open market project with many providers, though this is coupled with chronic shortages in recruitment to teacher education courses and school shortages.

After a period of change it is apt to review the nature and purpose of higher education in public professional life, and to consider the case for its future in the development of educators. A key contribution to that might come from reflection on the nature of teacher education in higher education institutions today, and in particular in those that make a claim to work with principles informed by faith based values, something that members of the Cathedrals Group claim (The Cathedrals Group of Universities 2018).

Behind the formal questions and aims of the project emerged a fundamental conceptual question: to what extent is the idea of teacher education expressed by a University, shared by its staff, students and schools? Can the particular strengths of such provision be clearly expressed and identified by these key stakeholders? Are there aspects of the teacher education in the most established that are significant to and discernible by those stakeholders?

Our findings suggest there are and that these make a difference to how schools view those students from the outset and also how they view applications from those students who apply to work at those schools. There is a high degree of trust shown by schools in students trained on courses with the local Cathedrals Group institution and this is in contrast with a lower level of trust shown by schools to out of region school based trained teachers. Students trained on school-led courses from outside of the local area, are not viewed in the same way as those trained by traditional local providers, and in particular, universities.

Although this study is essentially a study of perceptions and interpretations, based on interviews with schools, students and university tutors, collective perspectives from these three key groups emerged very clearly. This study has therefore become focused on organisation, mission articulation and communication.

From the outset it was apparent that the universities' conceptualisation of their link with their Christian foundation, and the ways in which this related to their professed values and curriculum decisions, varied. Some made explicit their relationship to a religion or denomination and framed their purpose through that language. Others emphasized shared values and shared concerns in their curriculum, but still identified values that were arguably implicitly Christian or compatible with a Christian worldview. Some institutions lay between these two markers. This study is, therefore, also a study in how 21st century universities make sense of their Christian / Catholic / Anglican foundations.

Whether a university has an implicitly Christian identity, associated with values, or an explicitly Christian identity, a coherence between those principles and the curriculum provision was a clear strength. Some institutions clearly understand their identity as having a particular role to ensure teachers are provided for religious schools and others see themselves as essentially serving the common good

Participants demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of these identities and missions. In one case students of different religions saw strength in their institution's religious identity. Elsewhere a commitment to the support of all religions was seen as a positive identifier in a Christian institution by a student who was not religious.

The research also revealed how individual members of staff understand and negotiate their identity in relation to the institutional ethos. In some cases, it was apparent that for staff, this was the first time they had sought to articulate their own understanding of this connection, as well as their interpretation of their university. They saw themselves in different ways: sometimes as institutional dissenters; sometimes undecided; sometimes positive leaners towards the ethos; and sometimes out an out active promoters of the ethos.

University tutor participants sometimes had absolute clarity on the religious dimension of the institution they worked in, and this was sometimes seen as the source of the shared values. Particular religious identities could sustain values that were shared across the religion and belief spectrum. For some, their personal and life journeys had a complex relationship with the religious foundation. In some cases they struggled to explain a sense or feeling that they had.

## Methodology

The research team decided to reverse the common pattern of broad survey and in depth interviews to follow, instead preferring in depth interviews and then surveys. The hypothesis was that more robust survey questions could be developed from the findings from a number of semi-structured conversations in advance. Then the survey responses could be used as a lens for drawing on findings from the interviews.

All members of the Cathedrals Group (CG) were invited to participate in the project. Participating universities had to offer a key contact who would conduct aspects of the project locally supporting the recruitment of participating students, schools and tutors. 5 universities were able to participate in the full project (qualitative and quantitative phases) and a further 1 was able to participate in only the second year, the quantitative element. None were rejected by the research group.

The participant institutions agreed to create a case study report about their institution and some resource was provided for that function, and also for the coordination of the project.

## Qualitative Stage (2016-2017)

The qualitative stage involved a document study and group interviews. The document / web study was carried out by a researcher in each institution to gain a picture of how institutions characterized their teacher education work and their institution. These documents included a selection of program handbooks, key partnership documents, and key marketing documents about the programmes, as well as associated webpages. The analysis of these documents was used to inform the development of a set of questions to be used in group interviews of student teachers, university teacher educators and staff from partnership schools.

A pilot study of this process was carried out at Canterbury Christ Church University before the four other participating universities proceeded with the interview phase.

Group interviews were carried out by researchers from the core NICER research team and were recorded. These interviews were then transcribed and provisionally analyzed using IPA to support the development of questions in the quantitative phase. There were 22 interviews in this stage involving over 100 participants. All participants were given participant information sheets and consent forms with the option to withdraw at any time, were made aware the interviews would be taped and were informed of how the data would be stored. All were given the opportunity to find out about the results and given information on how to do that. No participant asked to have their information removed and none have asked for follow up information.

## Quantitative Stage (2017-2018)

A provisional analysis of the transcriptions alongside the documentary analysis was used to develop a set of 3 surveys for each institution: a student survey, a tutor survey and a school survey. These questionnaires were designed to be short, taking less than 10 minutes, and involved a range of question types including multiple choice, drag and drop and open text entry responses.

Data from the surveys for university tutors was collected from 7/11/17 to 8/12/17. It was downloaded from Qualtrics in SPSS format. The data was then screened and cleaned and valid participants were retained from six participating institutions: Bishop Grosseteste University, Canterbury Christ Church University, Chester University, University of Chichester, Leeds Trinity University and St. Mary's University.

Across the six universities there were 808 valid respondents who participated in the online surveys:  
285 members of staff from partnership  
147 university teacher educators  
376 student teachers

## Lens

The researchers used the findings of the quantitative survey as a lens on the qualitative findings from the previous year. In many cases, themes appearing in the quantitative data could be easily identified in the interviews across the institutions but in some cases there were significant divergences from institution to institution. Institutional profiles are used on occasion in this report but the institutions are anonymized in keeping with the original plan. In so doing both shared characteristics and significant divergences could be identified within the data.

Confidentiality and anonymity was assured to the participants and the responses contained in this document are identified only in terms of whether they are student, tutor or school staff member, and by a number for each university, to give the reader some idea of whether responses were genuinely found from across the different locations.

## 2. What schools think

### Key Findings from the School Report

1. Staff members at partnership schools clearly prefer a student educated at their local Cathedrals Group institution. They preferred least a student that was trained in a school route from outside the locality. Alternative local providers were ranked in between. This was true for the individual universities and is a characteristic profile of the group. This was reflected in answers to two questions, a question that asked for an initial response to applicants from different kinds of training providers as well as a question that asked applicants to judge the qualities of trained teachers from different kinds of training providers.
2. According to School staff, “the University’s commitment to high standards of academic, evidence based professional development” is the most important motive for choosing a partnership with their local Cathedrals Group institution, followed by the fact that “the University has a long tradition of effective Teacher Education/ Training”.
3. Around 46% of respondents were positive or proud about the Christian foundation but this result hides considerable diversity within the institutional responses (from 25% to 68%), information not disclosed in this document. This suggests that Cathedrals Group institutions are able to strongly serve the ‘common’ sector and the particular Church school sector, given there are positive indicators of preference for the participating universities irrespective of how their school partners who responded in the survey feel about a Christian foundation. Schools express different understandings of how the Christian foundation relates to the teacher training provided.

### **1. If you could imagine a situation where you would be faced with job applications from student teachers who you have not trained yourself, which students would you expect to be a “safer choice” for employment?**

Schools clearly prefer a student from their own CG institution. They preferred least a student that was trained in a school route from outside the locality. Alternative local providers were ranked in between. This was true for the individual universities.

## Reflection 1 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

Q So we've got sort of the reputation and the consistency in dealing with [CG1 University].

A And you've got, there's a reputation of producing very good teachers. I mean that is the first thing she said to me when I went on placement, as I walked around she was like oh this is a [CG1 University].student, and this is a [CG1 University].student, this is a [CG1 University].student. So it's the reputation of having produced very good teachers that are employable as well.

(School partner of CG1 University)

A It's interesting what you said. I'd say two thirds of our senior team are from here as students. And that thing about being a vocation, whether they can actually explain that or verbalise it themselves I'm not sure, but there is certainly something that I would say I have identified in certain students I've had from here, there is something vocational about it.

(School partner of CG4 University)

A ...even when I was younger I even knew it was there, like it's got a really good reputation in the area of people that live here. And I've had colleagues that have come here, like say friends that have come here, and no one has ever said sort of a bad word about it.

(School partner of CG2 University)

A And we deal with several other institutes who supply ITT students to us and what I'd say is that there appears to be, it's part of their selection process, but the individuals that we tend to get from [CG5 University] often need less support than we find for other people so I would presume that would be part of their selection process for getting access onto the course, but they definitely need less support, often with some of the soft skills that we associate with good ITT students.

(School partner of CG5 University)

A I think normally we accept trainees through a variety of different routes including kind of the (CG3 University) PGCE kind of 7 to 14, 11 to 18, 14 to 19 routes. And also other providers as well, including SKIT providers. And I think what stands out for us with [CG3 university] is the quality of the trainee that comes through the door in terms of their organisation and subject knowledge willingness as well to engage with the support that we've put in place in school, I think it's kind of a partnership between us, it triangulates really between us, [CG3 university] and the student teacher as well, and we all seem to be singing off the same hymn sheet which is quite good.

.....

A So we know that when we get a [CG3 University] trainee the quality is going to be high and the scope for development is going to be quite wide as well, so that's been really positive ...

Q So you recruit them into the teaching force?

A 100%. Yes every year now, I think at the moment we have recently recruited I think seven NQTs for the next academic year and I think five of those are from [CG3 university], so every year it's growing, we're receiving more and more trainees from [CG3 university] and we're employing more of them, so it's good.

(School partner of CG3 university)

## **2. Below you will find a list of nine reasons as to why your school might choose to partner with X University. Although we know that all of these are very relevant motives, we are keen to gain a deeper understanding of their relative importance.**

My school chooses to partner with X University because...

1. we feel listened to
2. they share our education ethos and culture (the “why” of education)
3. we value the university's commitment to the local education community (e.g. School sponsorship, CPD)
4. we value the university's approach to education (the how of education)
5. we value the university's commitment to high standards of academic, evidence based professional development
6. we receive timely practical support
7. the university has a long tradition of effective teacher education/training
8. the university offers reliability and consistency
9. we value the quality and nature of the curriculum

According to School staff, “the University's commitment to high standards of academic, evidence based professional development” is the most important motive for choosing a partnership with their local CG University, followed by the fact that “the University has a long tradition of effective Teacher Education/Training”.

On the other hand the fact that they “...receive timely practical support” and “the quality and nature of the curriculum” are the least important motives in this decision together with “we value the University's commitment to the local Education community (e.g. school sponsorship, CPD)”.

## Reflection 2 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

**“I think it’s the opposite of a vicious circle, whatever the opposite is. A virtuous circle”**

I think it’s the opposite of a vicious circle, whatever the opposite is. A virtuous circle – I like that, thank you. I came here and then many years after that I did my post-grad and because of that I’m always drawn back to here and I know that the students that we get from [CG4 University], they have those values and I know that because I’ve been involved and I am always coming back here every few years to do something and I know that the quality is there and I know that certainly with the mentors that we’ve had and the students that we’ve had over the years I have never been disappointed with the support.  
(School partner of CG4 University)

**“I have faith in the lecturers here. They’re so well informed, they’re so well educated, they’re so passionate and interested about education”**

I don’t know if this is answering your question, but I have faith in the lecturers here. They’re so well informed, they’re so well educated, they’re so passionate and interested about education that any issues that do arise they make sure they’re addressed and that they inform the correct people whether it be the mentors or the students that they are supporting.  
(School partner of CG2 University)

**“they are very good the lecturers that come in and see the students, they are very good at doing the training”**

I think on the same point actually of class teacher mentors, they are very good the lecturers that come in and see the students, they are very good at doing the training for the teachers as well. And in a non-judgemental way  
(School partner of CG4 University)

## “it’s quite a long established team”

Q So the link with the tutors and the way the tutors respond to your needs, you’re saying?

A Yes. And it’s quite a long established team here as well, so we’ve become quite familiar with their practice and who they are as practitioners themselves.

(School partner of CG5 University)

### 3. Based on your experience of Student Teachers who trained on a programme led by XXX University, we would like you to use your first occurring thoughts to describe them along each of the bipolar scales below

Staff had to give a rating from 1 to 10, with 1 representing the more negative and 10 representing the more positive of the two bipolar extremes defined by the following pairs of adjectives:

1. Lazy/Hard working
2. Late/Punctual
3. Weak/Strong
4. Untrustworthy/Reliable
5. No discernible philosophy of teaching/Clear philosophy of teaching
6. Weak professional values/Strong professional values
7. Inflexible to change/Flexible to change
8. Limited in teaching approaches/ Varied in teaching approaches
9. Reluctant risk taker/Reasonable risk taker
10. Indifferent/Conscientious

Straight after, participants were also asked to use the same scales to rate a different target: **Student Teachers from other routes or institutions.**

The ratings given to students on programmes led by CG universities were all higher than those given to students from programmes led by other providers. Clear philosophy of teaching and Reliability was identified with the most marked difference.

This answer suggests a clear preference for CG University led teacher training in answer to this question. We may speculate on what precisely was understood in the minds of those who were answering the questions, but the most obvious interpretation is that they were distinguishing between traditional teacher education programmes and school led programmes. It is also possible that this is capturing a distinction among primary respondents between school led one year post graduate primary courses and three year undergraduate degree primary courses.

## Reflection 3 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

### “very reflective”

Q What do you think of somebody that’s trained here, what sort of teacher, you know if you could characterise them?

A I would say very reflective. I think there is a big emphasis on reflection. I mean I had it in my training it was very ‘you’ve got to reflect on your practice’ and I think that’s really important because without that you can’t get better. So I think I would say, if I had to sum up with one word I would say very reflective. And I think that experience I mean in my school I think we’ve got 6 or 7 teachers that trained at [CG1 University] and we’ve all had similar experiences, when we speak. Even though they might have been two years above me or they might have just qualified last year, the experiences are very similar, which I think is good the consistency throughout. (School partner of CG1 University)

### “resilient, enthused, experimental, impressive”

Q I’m kind of interested to know whether you have a sense of [CG3 University] as a provider, whether you have a sense of a [CG3 University] way or a sense of a kind of ethos or do you have a sense of maybe you detect a kind of philosophy of education that comes through?

A .... I think that we get some very resilient trainees from [CG3 University], ... I think that the trainees we have come through are enthused and inspired and want to do well. I think there is a real drive and energy behind the training that’s given and I think trainees that come in are quite experimental with their approaches in the classroom, I think the way they understand and use pedagogy is really impressive because they have that academic grounding and they don’t divide it so much between the university and what happens in the classrooms. (School partner of CG3 University)

I would say they were more grounded through their period of time in colleges and have a greater sense of the bigger picture of education, a greater sense of philosophy. They've actually got something that if somebody shakes their tree they could actually stand still and say no this is what I believe in, because they can track it all back

(School partner of CG4 University)

## **“really thorough and really organised and prepared to work really hard”**

I'll start us off if you like. So from a head teacher's point of view, I mean I have a recent anecdotal story where obviously we have [CG2 University] students and we then employ many of them as teachers straight after because the quality of them has been so high. Incidentally about 2 or 3 years ago we also hired a newly qualified teacher who didn't train at [CG2 University] and this could be completely coincidentally, there's no evidence behind this as well but she was of a completely different calibre and actually much lower and seemed much less well informed, less well prepared and everything about her teaching was less structured and we had to put a lot more support into that NQT than we have done for all of the [CG2 University] ones

(Headteacher in partnership with CG2 University)

They seem to be encouraged to be really thorough and really organised and prepared to work really hard.

(Headteacher in partnership with CG2 University)

I think that [CG3 University] as a provider is structured, well organised,

(Senior school leader in partnership with CG3 University)

## **“greater enthusiasm and rigour for their own professional development”**

Q So is there more a sort of academic background is that what you're saying?

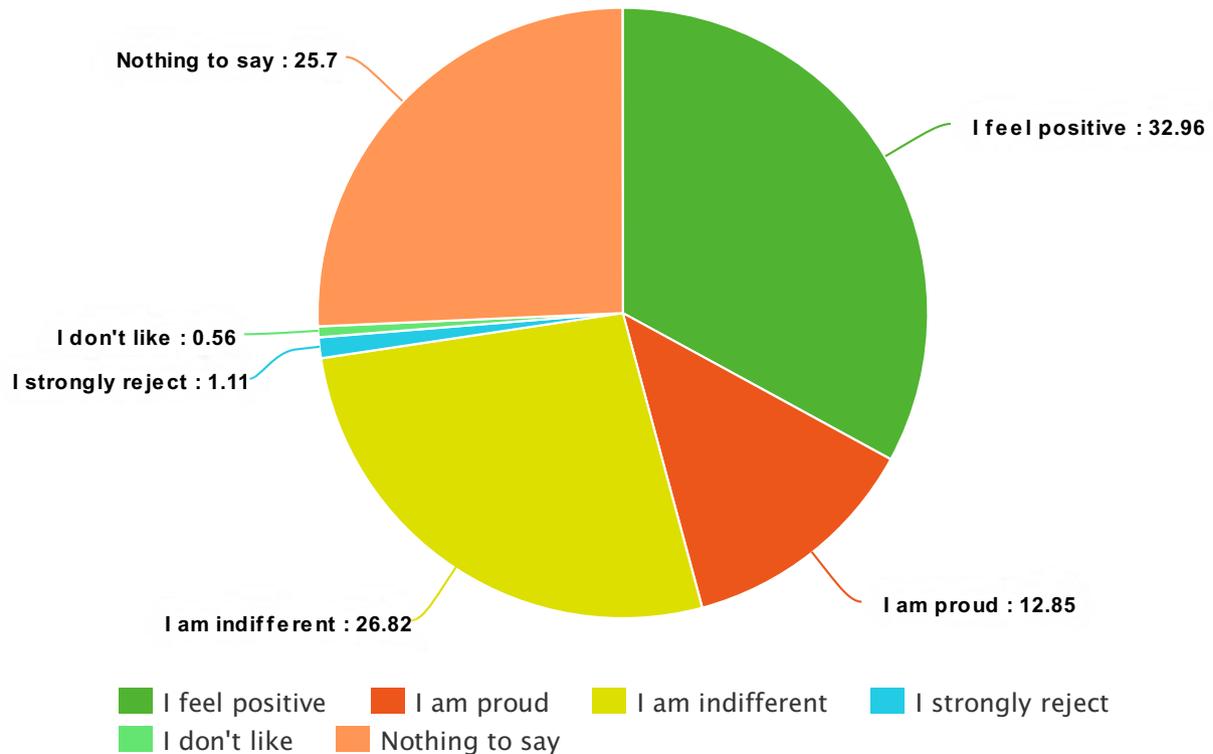
A Yes. And also they have this sort of greater enthusiasm and rigour for their own professional development so they're not sort of reliant on the school to provide that, they're actually actively reading around the subject and progressing themselves.

(School partner CG5 University)

#### 4. Which of these matches more closely your personal attitudes towards the fact that Cathedrals Group University has a foundation that is Christian?

The six possible answer choices given (presented in a different random order to each participant to avoid presentation bias) were:

- I feel positive about working with an institution which has a Christian foundation
- I am proud about Cathedrals Group (CG) University's Christian foundation and it strengthens my identity
- I am indifferent to CG University's Christian foundation
- I strongly reject CG University's Christian foundation
- I don't like CG University's Christian foundation
- I don't have anything to say about this



46% of respondents chose positive or proud. 53% chose the options I have nothing to say about this or I am indifferent. Very few indeed chose to express an opposition to the foundation.

Preliminary observation: Institutions that participated in the survey can compare these results with their own institution profiles and there are significant differences with some institutions registering a significantly higher proportion of those choosing positive or proud and some a lower proportion. Local school stakeholders express differences which are consistent with the different approaches institutions make in how they express their identity with regards their Cathedrals Group status, and their Christian foundation.

## Reflection 4 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

Comments about the Christian dimension in the school surveys produced no single profile. This selection shows the diversity of responses and their key themes.

### “it has the Christian morals”

Q Focusing a little bit more on [CG1 university] then, about the teacher training here. We’ve talked a lot and you’ve given some really interesting ideas. Does any of that connect to the fact that this is a university with a Christian foundation, with a Catholic foundation?

A I’m trying to think. I think it has very, I think the morals of the university it has the Christian morals. It’s very much, how I think of this university is very much how I think of my school. So it has Christian undertones and a Christian moral.

Q Was there anything else you’d identify when you were here that you’d say yes that shows it’s a Christian university or that shows it’s got a Christian foundation?

A It’s hard because I’m trying to think of what it would be to, I mean the things I am thinking of it’s more being a good university. I don’t know if it would necessarily be a Christian, like the openness of it. I am not sure if that would be a particularly Christian undertone or whether that’s just being good. It was very supportive and like the fact that it is again very small as in you had the small lecture sizes and so although it’s open you feel very comfortable and safe, kind of. But I am not sure if that would be overly Christian or whether it’s just supportive.

Q But that’s what [CG1 university] is?

A Yes, yes.  
(School partner of CG1 University)

## **“This is a place, in opposition to Alastair Campbell, this is a place where we do do God.”**

So I am really pleased that people can come to us who are confident in their faith and I think it reflects what the student said today ‘this is a place where faith is important’. This is a place, in opposition to Alastair Campbell, this is a place where we do do God.  
(School partner of CG4 University)

## **“It doesn’t explicitly say it, I don’t think, but I think you get an idea of it”**

Q So to start with a sort of general question, we’re focusing on teacher training. Does anything about the teacher training that you have in contact with [CG3 University] feel in any way that it’s connected with a Christian university, a Christian foundation university? Is there anything you can think about of the teacher training aspect that you’re involved with?

A Possibly the [CG3 University] student, at the beginning of the all the booklets it outlines the [CG3 University] student. It doesn’t explicitly say it, I don’t think, but I think you get an idea of it within that of the expectation.

A Although I wouldn’t necessarily connect it to one particular... it’s more ecumenical, Christian faith. Certainly nothing explicit that I am aware of.  
(School partner of CG3 University)

## **“there’s no reference to that cultural, that religious basis.”**

Q So that soft skills that’s coming out as something really important. Taking this a little bit in a different direction, how much of what we’ve been talking about so far links back to the fact that this is an institution with a Christian foundation? Or doesn’t it?

A My opinion is no, it has no effect whatsoever.

A I agree.

A And I think that society is so secular now that I don’t think it has any influence whatsoever and I don’t know whether that’s taken into account when people are selected, perhaps if it is, then maybe I am wrong.

Q That will be a question for me to follow up actually.

A Certainly in our documentation and in the handbooks and everything you get there’s no reference to that cultural, that religious basis.

A I don't see that in practice, you know, I don't see it in practice. Although of course there's an argument to say that if we talk about kind of Christian values they often sit in with some of the stuff we've been talking about. But I don't know whether that's a conscious decision as in we'll accept this person because they demonstrate this, or they have attended this school or they're of some particular faith. But it's not something that, you know we certainly wouldn't be interested in it.

Q Would you know, or did you know that this was an institution with a Christian foundation?

A I didn't know that, no. And I came here and did a Master's degree! I didn't know that at all, no.  
(School partner CG5 University)

# 3. What students think

## Key Findings of the Student Report

1. The question, ‘What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of ... [name of the specific institution]. ....?’ permitted an open response and it is striking that the words supportive, community, friendly, good and welcoming featured strongly alongside more obvious choices (such as teaching, education and training). These words had featured in the qualitative interviews with respect to tutors, mentors, the campus and welcome days. The small feel of the institutions was cited and some students specifically linked these to the Christian dimension of the institution.
2. Students were asked to rate a number of possible factors as motivations for coming to their CG institution. Of the options available the ones that scored most positively were: ‘it has a good reputation’, ‘the institution has a friendly environment’ and ‘its academic excellence.’
3. When asked about the added values of their institution, added factors which they thought mattered most in coming to their CG institution were: “Access to subject specialist expert”, “interaction with academic staff” and an opportunity to “develop a sense of professional identity.”
4. When asked about how students felt about the Christian foundation status of the institution, the profile of responses varied considerably from institution to institution. There is no group characteristic profile and student answers in the interviews were very diverse as well.

## SECTION 1

Q1 What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of ...  
[name of the specific institution].....?

44	teaching
25	education
22	training
19	<b>supportive</b>
19	university
18	teacher
14	<b>community</b>
11	<b>friendly</b>
11	degree
9	work
8	learning
8	<b>good</b>
7	<b>welcoming</b>
7	campus

This is a 60% selection of the highest weighted categories. Words in bold related to key evaluative themes that are also present in the qualitative research.

## Reflection 1 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

In the 2016/17 qualitative research found that when questioned about support, students answered with a range of responses. Tutors are singled out as a key point of support:

But I could call my tutor up whenever I wanted, I could speak to my mentor at my school who is brilliant, and my tutor is brilliant. And it's having those supports, like the personal support I think is more important .... (PG secondary student at CG3)

Our tutor she's really supportive, she always comes into school when I'm in there, she comes in not because she has a reason, just to like see how we are and see how we're doing. Obviously she has actually has come in to observe and that but she also makes time to just come in to see how we are, which we all find really supportive. And she's always there for advice and emails or something, it's really helpful. (UG primary student at CG3)

I found all the lecturers were really supportive especially through assignments and everything you can just email them or email a forum and they'll answer it pretty much straight away, or do their best to answer it. And that's really supportive as well. When I was on placement it was mainly the link tutor, like they provide good link tutors and the one I had he was amazing. (UG primary student at CG4)

Sometimes the support from the university is perceived as a key contrast to other locations of support, including school.

I think from what they said the support I was getting from my tutor as well as the support they were getting from my tutor really enhanced the experience for both of us. (UG primary student at CG2)

Sometimes students identified the support of fellow university students as the principle source of support:

Q But you would say your main support, if you were looking at every day support?

A Each other. (UG primary student at CG1)"

Sometimes students identified stories of support from the institution as something they heard about before coming:

She [a former student the interview had spoken to before making a choice about where to study] just really enjoyed it and got on really well here and enjoyed all her placements, and felt it was really supportive as well. (Primary student at CG4)

Support was also referred to in a different way, in terms of a financial factor for choosing local for a subject course which did not get external funding:

It was local. And if I'm being honest it saved me a lot of money because with the PE you don't get any monetary support. (Secondary student at CG5)

The qualitative research introduced the topic of 'support' in the questions asked but the surveys began with a question about a word the students associated so the prominence of support in those responses suggests that it is a significant factor, both of how students evaluate the training they experience, and also what they look for in a training provider.

## Community and care features as factor that students mentioned as

Some students explicitly identified community as something connected to the Christian ethos of the institution:

A A small uni – all the lecturers know you, they know your name  
[secondary student CG1 university]

A There is a sense of community ...know each other... (teacher education students at CG1 university)

A Yes, I would say because I am not religious and I did know it was a Catholic uni but I wouldn't say that it swayed my choice in any way because obviously it didn't. But I don't ever feel like I am outcast in any way because I am not a Catholic or whatever. So yes it does create a nice community but obviously I can't really compare that to another university because I haven't been to any others.  
(teacher education student)

Q So do you feel like you're kind of part of a long community that's been around like teachers and....would that be a word to use? I'm trying to work out...

A Yes.

A I feel like as soon as we graduate we will feel like that. Just like a ladder.

A Missionaries, or a coven!

A A coven of teachers.

A I think yes for me as well being on a sports team at the university there's a real family feel to it. Like the sports stuff that's what everyone says we're like one big family. I think that extends out to teaching stuff as well. Whenever I go into... my last placement school that I was in there were two teachers that trained here and my first day they came up to me oh you trained at [CG2 university] do you know this person, or this person? Oh they were my lecturer. And yes straight away it's like that almost community type feel of oh I'm willing to give you a helping hand you're [CG2 university] I'm alumni let's sort of... that little family almost....

A It's true.

(primary undergraduate students at CG2 university)

Q Anything else?

A [CG4 university] was the first university I looked at, I walked in and as I walked in I thought oh I want to go here and I told my mum I want to go here and she was like you need to look at others and I was no I just feel like I want to go here. I don't know what it was but I just walked in and I was like I really want to go here, then I met all the staff and things like that and it just secured my thought really. I looked at a lot of other universities as well but I always felt like [CG4 university] was the place I wanted to go and wanted to study

Q So it was just a feeling.

A Yes, I don't know, I can't explain it. I literally walked in and thought oh I love it here, it's so nice, and people even now still say why did you choose to go and I don't know it's just sort of the feel and the atmosphere here.

A I think as well for my different interview days, I felt like here cared most about you. Like they cared what you were doing at the minute, they cared what you were going to do, what you were doing in your summer. Whereas I didn't feel that as much with a few other unis.

[CG4 university primary students]

A Yes I think it does. It kind of adds to the whole community feeling and the whole idea that everyone is kind of known by name and it's kind of more personalised compared to other universities. So I think it does make a difference.

(teacher education students at CG4 university)

## 2. You chose this Teacher Training course. You probably had a number of motivations. Below there are some possible reasons and we would like to know how important each of these were in your experience.

The eight possible choices given (presented in a different random order to each participants to avoid presentation bias) were:

- It is local
- It's values and ethos
- It has a good reputation
- The institution has a friendly environment
- It has a long tradition in teacher training
- Its academic excellence
- Previous experience with the institution
- Its Christian ethos

### KEY FINDING

Three motives are rated Very or Extremely Important:

- It has a good reputation,
- The institution has a friendly environment
- Its academic excellence.

Two motives, on the other hand receive an average rating which can be considered least important:

- Previous experience with the institution
- Its Christian ethos.

Participants could also enter text and many did. The following selection underscores the important factors identified above:

- A friend recommended it
- I always heard it was the best university for teacher training in England, and it just so happened that my mother went to the university, and it is 7 miles from home.
- I have had the course, uni and lecturer recommended by many past students
- I know many teachers that have completed their teacher training through.
- It was recommended by three different people on three different courses.
- Lots of good recommendations from others who have attended the university
- I liked that the university is small
- Friendly staff at welcome days
- I always felt very welcome when visiting the university
- One of the best institutions for teacher training
- Small uni and friendly staff
- The institution was friendly and welcoming and is connected to Primary Schools for placement in my local area.
- The support and welcoming nature of staff
- The welcoming staff on open days
- Welcoming
- When I came to induction I felt directly at ease with the uni
- Word of mouth
- Word of mouth about the support given to students

## Reflection 2 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

In the 2016/17 qualitative research student answers given by students gave a particular story which indicated that there was a key recommendation from a person they trusted. This may be one source for their sense of reputation.

A All my four choices were London universities and it got to the point where I was just a bit like they all seem quite good and I had no idea really, but then my auntie who I don't really see a lot is a teacher. And I saw her on the off chance kind of thing and she said oh what are your choices, and I told her all four, and she goes '[CG4 University] - go [CG4 University]'. And I was like ok, and she was like if we have people come in with applications that's one of the best ones. So I think reputation really led my choice.  
[Primary postgraduate CG4 University student]

A And I'd heard good things.  
[Secondary postgraduate CG5 University student]

A I don't know. When I found out that she came here, because she's my step mum. And she said I don't know really, she said it was really, really good. The tutors were experienced and experts in their field so it was easier to kind of become a better teacher because you've got better people teaching you.  
[Primary undergraduate CG3 University student]

A So I think for me that was a really important part of wanting to choose [CG2 University] as my university was the expertise that I knew in all different areas, not just mine is PE and I know the PE department here is really strong and I've seen that over my few years. But also like the English department and stuff, there's well known lecturers and names....

A Reputation isn't it.

A ... yes, within different departments. So you've got maths and English and there's some really well known, like you type into google, scholar certain different parts, some of our lecturers' names are popping up as the first couple of results so for me that was a real difference to some of the other universities that I looked into, yes was the reputation of the teaching degrees itself as well as the reputation of the staff who deliver those teaching degrees. I think it's quite well renowned and well looked upon as one of the best teaching universities ....

Q But it affected your decision?

A Oh yes, massively so. When you read around subjects and look into things, I did a foundation degree before I came onto this, and just looking into having done that extra little bit and having referenced some of the names that I was seeing on a list was a little bit more telling for me.

A You hear it as well when you're on placement, the teachers say they know the type of student they're getting from this university because of the reputation.

Q Do you hear that at school?

A We hear it in schools.  
[Primary education students at CG2 university]

A But I wanted to specialise, I wanted to specialise in my subject and be able to work with people who had a passion for [subject] too. And I think that is what made me decide to do the PGCE at [CG3 University], because although it's university based we are in schools a lot.  
[Secondary student CG3 university]

### 3. Registering with the “this institution” has a number of added values. How important do you think each of the ones listed below is?

The six possible choices given (presented in a different random order to each participants to avoid presentation bias) were:

- Experience with other students training in different schools
- Trainees have the chance to interact with academic staff
- Students develop a sense of professional identity
- Experience of student community on the course
- Access to subject specialist experts
- The ethos, culture and feel of the place

All answers were measured on a 5 points Likert-like scale were 1=Extremely Important; 2=Very Important; 3=Moderately Important; 4=Slightly Important; 5=Not at all Important.

#### KEY FINDING:

Three added values can be considered the most important:

- Access to subject specialist expert
- Trainees have the chance to interact with academic staff
- Students develop a sense of professional identity.

The other three added values are only slightly less important:

- Experience with other students training in different schools
- Experience of student community on the course.
- The ethos, culture and feel of the place.

### Reflection 3 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

There were 2016/17 interview responses which referred to the most important values.

A She [the university subject tutor] gave me the impression that she knew her subject well.  
[Secondary student CG3 university]

A And being a good teacher, well the subject knowledge is key. So like because we have lecturers in all the specific subjects and things like that and it means they really do know their stuff so they can help us and provide like well-planned out lectures so that we can use those resources when we do go out to schools.  
[Primary student CG4 university]

A Every single tutor that I've been in lecturers with, I mean maybe bar one or two at the very worst, they've all been extremely passionate about their subject and the subject matter that they're teaching. I am an English specialist and they're just, the passion there like [tutor name] with drama and everything, but it's the passion they've got for it does nothing but inspire you sometimes you know, sounds quite corny saying that but it's true for me. I find some English aspects quite difficult but they really sort of inspire you to do well. And I think that's right across the board, even for the science thing, and I'm talking for you because you're science. But there's my AA's a science lecturer and from all the science lectures that we've had she's just, it's amazing. You want to do it and I think that speaks volumes doesn't it.

[Primary student CG2 university]

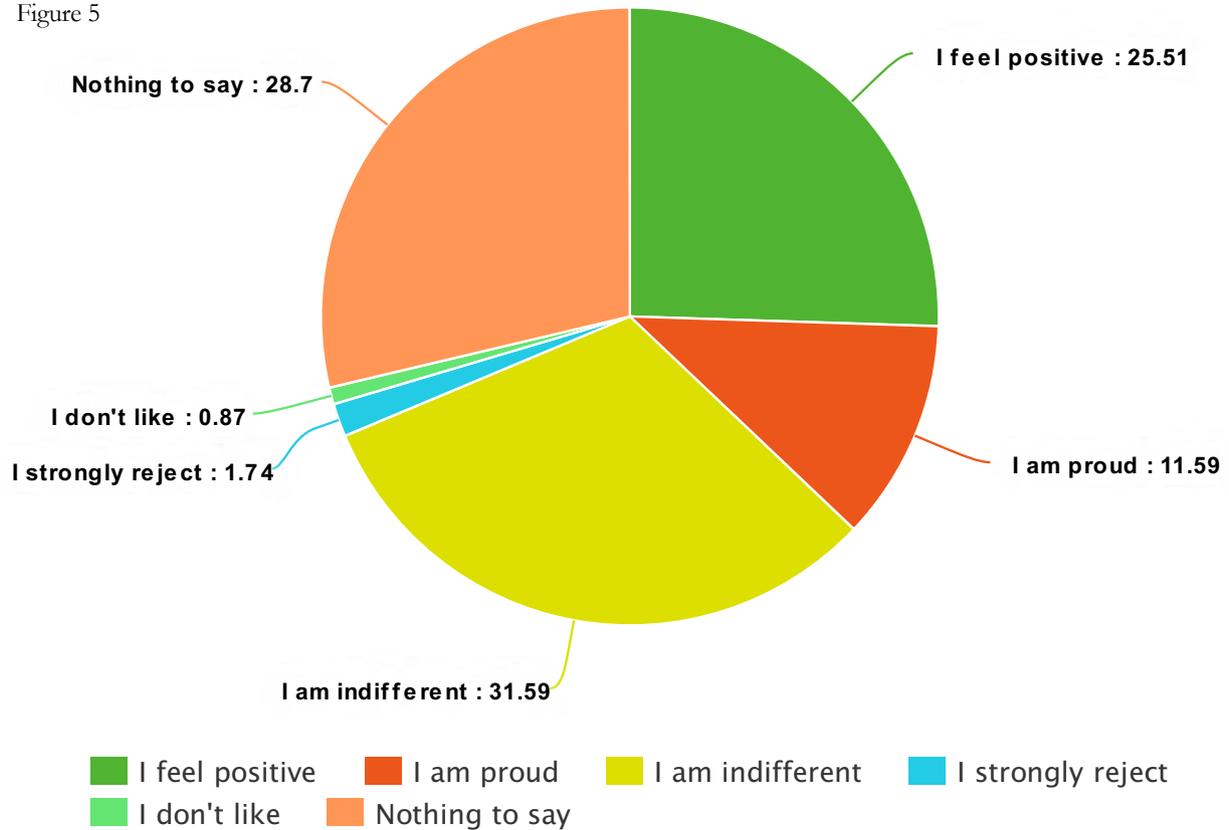
#### 4. Which of these matches more closely your personal attitudes towards the fact that the “this institution” has a foundation that is Christian?

The six possible answer choices given (presented in a different random order to each participants to avoid presentation bias) were:

- I feel positive about working with an institution which has a Christian foundation
- I am proud about the “this institution’s Christian foundation and it strengthens my identity
- I am indifferent to the “this institution’s Christian foundation
- I strongly reject the “this institution’s Christian foundation
- I don’t like the “this institution’s Christian foundation
- I don’t have anything to say about this

Participants were asked to choose only one option as representing their attitudes. Given the Categorical nature of this question the best way to summarise the information collected is via a count of frequencies represented in Table 5 and by the bar chart of Figure 5.

Figure 5



The higher percentage is associated with the option “I am indifferent...” (N=109, 31.6%) closely followed by “I have nothing to say...” (N=99, 28.7%) and “I feel positive about working with an institution which has a Christian foundation N=88, 25.5%. The option “I don’t like “this institution’s Christian foundation” was only chosen by 3 of the respondents and it’s therefore the least favourite option with a frequency of 0.9%.

## KEY FINDING:

For 37.1% of the sample when asked about the Christian foundation, it is something they feel positive about. For 0.8% it is something they feel negative about. We might argue that for almost 63% it is not a significant factor but perhaps we should be careful about combining those responses. For those who had nothing to say about it (28.7%), maybe that response hides complex mixed, but nevertheless strong feelings. Perhaps there was a reluctance or inability to express those feelings.

## Reflection 4 from the 2016/17 qualitative research

In the 2016/17 qualitative research student answers to the question about the Christian foundation generated a range of responses but ambiguity might be the best way to describe them. In some cases there was a clear link between the choice of university and access to the Church school sector:

A Yes. I think in terms of the university the chapel was very, it's quite a focal point of the campus in a way. [physically]. And because I was there for my undergrad. And also when we started our first, the talk we had on the first day, the chaplain was quite a big presence in terms of support. And yes the chaplain was a nice bloke actually. But generally in terms of sort of Christian ethos kind of presence, generally no. but as I said before, having been taught by [CG3 university tutor 1] and [CG3 university tutor 2] knowing the sort of backgrounds you've come from, that's where it comes from as opposed to it being the university ethos. It's more of maybe your personal thing.  
[Secondary student CG3 university]

Q Well we were looking at the influence of being in [CG5 university] and whether, we touched a little bit on it, it was a Christian foundation whether that had any influence on what you were doing or...?

A No it wouldn't have any influence, it wouldn't bother me if there were, it wouldn't bother me if it weren't.  
No  
[Secondary student at CG5 university]

A Yes, I would say because I am not religious and I did know it was a Catholic uni but I wouldn't say that it swayed my choice in any way because obviously it didn't. But I don't ever feel like I am outcast in any way because I am not a Catholic or whatever. So yes it does create a nice community but obviously I can't really compare that to another university because I haven't been to any others.  
[Secondary student at CG1 university]

Q So last question. This is a [redacted for anonymity], a church university, some sort of Christian basis thing. Is there anything in what you said or anything in how you feel about coming here that you make connections between any of those words and this? Is it kind of irrelevant, or is it something you notice?

A I think if some people who don't know the university that much may kind of be '[CG3 University] ah probably religious maybe or more kind of one sided. But because the students that I know in older years, I know there's quite a lot of international students, quite a lot of multi-cultural and multi faith and I don't associate the title with kind of any meaning. I just think people are great, so it's very diverse.

A When I first heard of it I was a bit put off by the name. I was thinking it's going to be a really religious place and so when I came to look around anyway and when I looked around I realised it wasn't like that at all, like on open day. So then I decided to come here because of all the good things I'd heard about it, I hadn't heard anything about it being religious and things like that.

A Yes and even walking down to the food court when you've got the chapel and then going from Fisher building down to touchdown and they've got prayer rooms for Muslim students I just...

Q So that's a positive thing?

A Yes. Because they're not segregating, they are catering to everybody's needs regardless of your faith, where you're from, anything. It's all joined in one.

Q So having that... although there was some anxiety maybe, seeing it and seeing it in that way with prayer rooms does it become a positive thing?

A Yes definitely.

[Primary students CG3 university]

I think that building on what you said, it does open more options. Because we're looking more focused on how to teach in Catholic schools, church schools, and I think my last two placements haven't been. So doing this course has given me more insight to say when I graduate if I want to apply to a Catholic school I will have more of an insight. So even if next year my placement is not in a Catholic school I have had the chance to learn a bit more about it and what's involved.

[Primary student at CG4 university]

## 4. What university tutors think

Data from the surveys for university tutors was collected from 7/11/17 to 8/12/17. It was downloaded from Qualtrics in SPSS format. The data was then screened and cleaned. A total of 143 valid participants were then retained from six participating institutions: Bishop Grosseteste University, Canterbury Christ Church University, Chester University, University of Chichester, Leeds Trinity University and St. Mary's University.

There are a number of ways to train to teach and we recognize that curriculum is everything that happens in training. However there are other important elements that are offered by the providers. We are interested in knowing your opinions with regards to these content areas.

Participants had to rate each of the 11 areas below as to Essential (scored as 3) Desirable (scored as 2) or Optional/Extra (scored as 1).

1. Primary pedagogy
2. Subject specific pedagogy
3. Enhanced subject knowledge
4. Experience of special needs and inclusion in education
5. Diversity of placement
6. School/classroom experience
7. Specialized sessions on values, character and ethos
8. Sessions that specifically address Catholic/Christian/religious aspects of education
9. Focus on evidence and research based Education
10. Elective opportunity to research an area of interest
11. An experience of education in a different country or culture

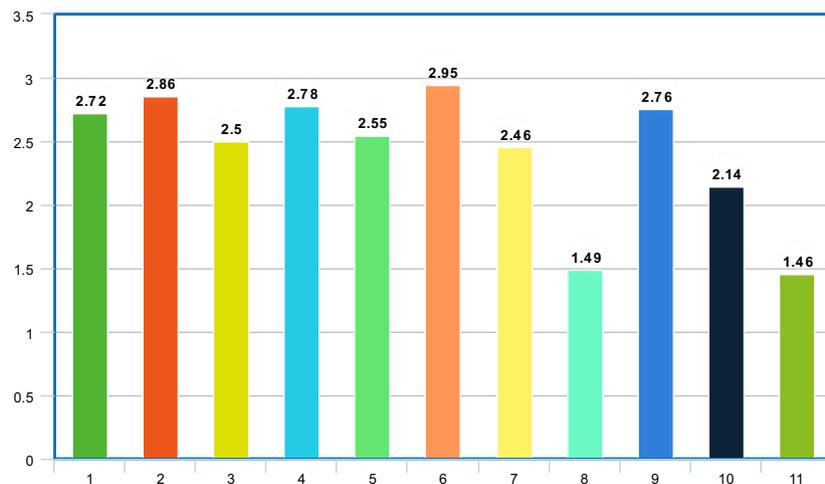


Figure 4. Average number of points/inverse of ranks, given to additional areas of the curriculum

Figure 4, shows the average ratings given to each areas by participants. The most essential aspects of the curriculum for University respondents are: the School/classroom experience, the Subject Specific Pedagogy and Experience of special needs and inclusion in education. On the other hand, Sessions that specifically address Catholic/Christian/religious aspects of education are considered more optional, together with an experience of education in a different country or culture.

## KEY FINDING:

University respondents identify these aspects of the curriculum as most important:

- School/classroom experience
- Subject Specific Pedagogy
- Experience of special needs and inclusion in education

## The open text questions

The remaining questions were open text answer questions. These have been analyzed by frequency of word use and those that contain numerically significant groupings included in this report. In interpreting these answers, priority is given to terms identified many times

**In your own words, tell us the values and attitudes you know your students will have acquired by the time they leave you**

The two frequently used (around 23%) word group to appear in tutor responses to this question was profession (including professionalism) and commitment (including committed. Resilience, respect and inclusion were the other frequently (around 18%) mentioned qualities referred to in the statements answers.

**Which learning content matters most in your teacher education/training course?**

Over half of the responses mentioned subject knowledge, subject pedagogy or both. These far outstripped all other responses by a significant factor

**How do you think your students are best supported in their training/education?**

Responses to this question were clustered evenly around the words support, tutors, school and mentors.

**Which specific module you think would be a good representative example of the values, methods, contents, etc. that define your course?**

The most frequently given response (over 20%) referred to professional studies. This was mentioned in a significant number of responses.

### **What else marks the teacher training your institution offers?**

The most frequently given response (over 13%) referred to professional studies.

## **Which of these matches more closely your personal attitudes towards the fact that THIS INSTITUTION has a foundation that is Christian?**

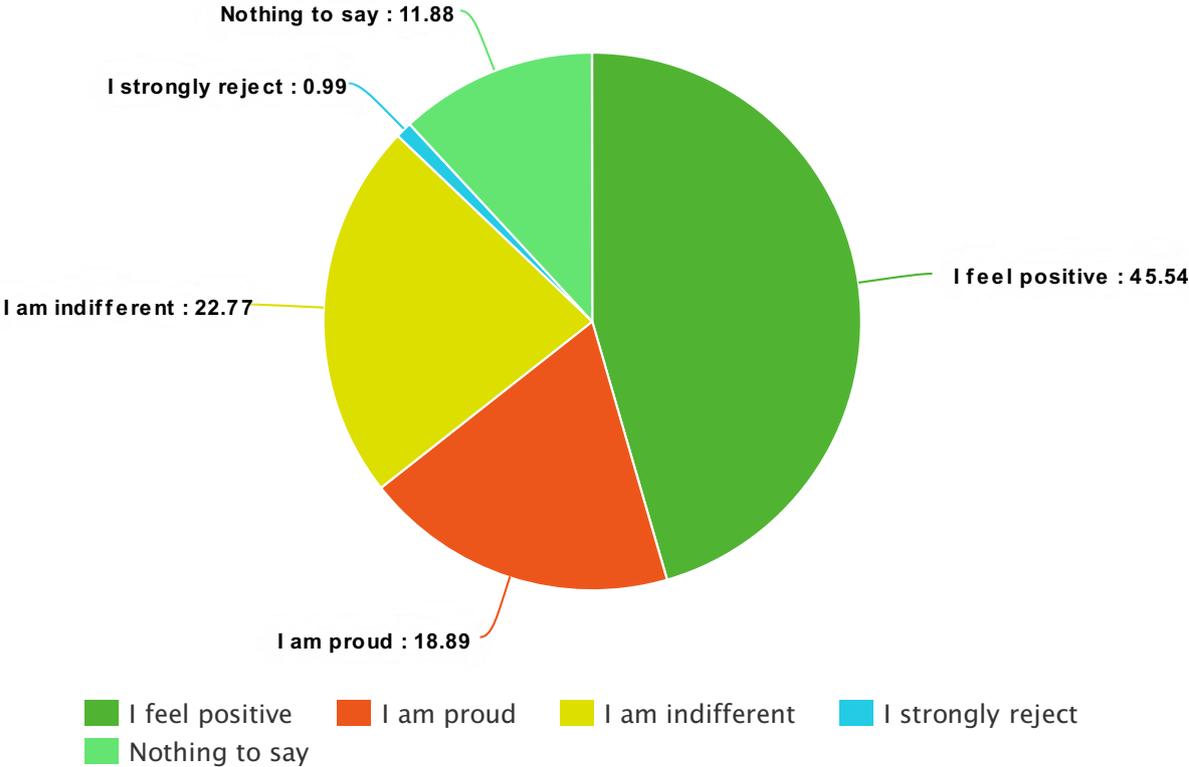
The six possible answer choices given (presented in a different random order to each participants to avoid presentation bias) were:

- I feel positive about working with an institution which has a Christian foundation
- I am proud about THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation and it strengthens my identity
- I am indifferent to THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation
- I strongly reject THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation
- I don't like THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation
- I don't have anything to say about this

Participants were asked to choose only one option as representing their attitudes.

The higher percentage is associated with the option "I feel positive about working with an institution which has a Christian foundation" (N=46, 45.5%) followed by "I am indifferent to THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation" (N=23, 22.8%) and "I am proud about THIS INSTITUTION's foundation and it strengthens my identity" (N=19, 18.8%). "I don't have anything to say about this" received a few choices (N=12 11.9%) while only one person said "I strongly reject THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation" (1%) and the option "I don't like THIS INSTITUTION's Christian foundation" was not chosen by any of the respondents and it is therefore the least favourite option with a frequency of 0%.

Figure 5. Frequency of responses for each attitude about Christian affiliation



**KEY FINDING:**  
68.3 of University respondents feel positive or proud in relation to their institution’s Christian foundation

## On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend THIS INSTITUTION to a friend or colleague?

This question is used to compute what is called a Net Promoter Score. First of all participants are categorised as:

- Promoters if they chose option 9 or 10, the highest levels
- Passives if they scored 7 or 8
- Detractors if they chose of 6 or lower

The percentage of each category in the sample is calculated and then a NPS is obtained by computing %of Promoters - % of Detractors. The possible scores therefore range from -100 for extreme cases where all participants scored 6 or less, to +100 where all participants scored 9 or 10.

In this sample the NPS is  $55\% - 15\% = 40\%$ . This can be judged against sector benchmark provided at [www.youthsight.com/higher-education-research-snippets-march-2013-snippet-5-uk-universities-and-their-net-promoter-scores/](http://www.youthsight.com/higher-education-research-snippets-march-2013-snippet-5-uk-universities-and-their-net-promoter-scores/)

### KEY FINDING:

The Net Promoter Score from university respondents is 40%, which is the overall sector average and at the higher end of the Million + sector response.

## Extracts from the 2016/17 qualitative research

Interviews with university tutors took place in 5 institutions in a variety of formats (focus group, small group, individual). These were led by one or two members of the lead research teams and used the same semi structured questions. The themes and extracts included here represent a representative range of responses to show the diversity of responses in the different participating CG institutions. Tutor responses were often multilayered, ranging across themes and were also often lengthy.

### ‘the learner is at the heart of everything we do’

A Yes I think that is the overriding thing that the students come first, don't they. And I had a situation the other day where I was in a school with a student and on a visit that should have taken two hours, it took five. I got a parking ticket, I didn't know what I was going to say, but that's just typical of what you do, if something needs doing people sort of get in there and sort it.

A And it is about putting the students first. But also it's about children because we all come from the children, I think it's about knowing how we want to serve the children that we started wanting to serve in the first place.  
[CG4 University tutors]

A I think one of the things in the vision and the statement is that the learner is at the heart of everything we do and I think that really is true, that we do put them first, it's will this have a positive impact. And sometimes it doesn't always work out in terms of their perception of things but that doesn't mean that at every stage and every decision that is made as a faculty we don't think about the students and the impact on them.

A We care. The team care.

A I think we like to be role models for the way that, for the type of teacher that we want them to be. We hope that they will put the learner, their learners, at the heart of everything that they do and I think we model that really well by putting them as the student, you know the ATs at the heart of everything that we do.  
[CG5 university tutors]

A We get feedback from open days as well, of people who've been to us and been to others. And they've said that certain competitors' open days are very 'look at us aren't we brilliant!' and very kind of performance driven, whereas they come to us and get a real sense of care and community and a really friendly feel which I suppose marks us apart a little bit.

A Like you say, one of the things that they have in terms of support is to have a profile which sort of maps and charts their progress and their learning journey through the programme and it starts by getting them to reflect on where they are right at the start, and we identify a target from the interview. But one of the things we ask them always is why did they choose [CG2 university]. And that word 'friendly', 'family feel', 'small', 'Intimate' are really highlighted.  
(CG2 University tutors)

## Curriculum

A Can I just say one more thing? From a distinctively Christian perspective, and I contribute to the programme for a BA ITT and this would be to train, and I speak there about the teachers and future teachers modelling their ministry on Christ. And I see that in my colleagues around the table and indeed around the university. We actually do invite, include, etc etc. so I mean the students see this modelled for them in this university.

A I think also it's an obvious one in many ways, but this is part of our mission to develop teachers who might wish to teach in faith based settings. And while that is in terms of numbers of schools, we work with far more community schools than we do with faith based schools, that still is an important signifier. And going back to what [tutor name] was saying about enhancement of RE both on our PGCE courses and our undergraduate courses, is a very important aspect of that. So in a sense that does make a slightly different... I think also our continued commitment to offering a full range of primary subjects which we think is absolutely essential in order to be able to teach confidently in the primary classroom.

[CG4 university tutors]

Q How does that manifest itself in terms of what goes on on the programmes?

A Direct courses. So we've got a citizenship route which I am teaching, which is again I think we're about the only place in the country that does that as a primary subject specialism. Also we have equality and diversity, we're now putting it in through professional studies wherever possible. It used to be stand-alone, one off workshops in each of the year groups of the undergrads and post-grads. But also we've got a course on global citizenship which just started  
[CG2 university tutor]

A And if children or young people choose to actually then look at what is it to teach in faith schools, we have the [Christian] education modules, we always set those up to focus on what the expectations are in the [Christian] schools, but then we align it to how transferable this is to working with other faiths. We've got specialist modules for what we call the [specific denominational certificate], we've got specialist modules as they go through their career where they can return to us and do Masters level training in leadership to [Christian] levels or for example heads of RE can look at leading the subject of RE or they can look at leading the subject of RE in faith schools, or in [Christian] schools. Those modules are there and available, so we've got that expertise.  
[CG1 university tutor]

Q Is there anything else, any other aspirations that you would have for teacher training?

A Teacher training as a whole. Just thinking. I think it is much more about how I'd like to see greater links, I'd like to see, because we're a Christian university, I would like to see that coming through the programmes more strongly. I'd like to sort of see opportunities to use What If learning and Christian approaches to teaching and learning. I'm not saying it's something everybody will go for, but discussions about it. I'd like to see particular modules maybe that prepare students for teaching in Christian academies, church schools and possibly even whole programmes of preparation eventually.  
[CG3 University tutor]

Q Start with a question, then. Is there anything about teacher training here that you could say shows a Christian foundation or that you would say was linked to the fact that [CG3 university] is a Christian foundation university?

A ... I think there is a Christian ethos and I think that we do try to care deeply about the student experience, look after the students. We do put a tremendous amount of help into supporting them. So from the kind of ethos side I'd say that there is, but possibly in terms of the structure of the courses and the aims and objectives of the courses that wouldn't necessarily reflect as fully as might be possible a Christian approach to teaching and learning.

Q Is there anything that you could point to in the documents and say well that highlights the Christian foundation, like your programme documents or prospectuses and stuff that you give the students?

A Not directly, I wouldn't say directly draws it to the attention. I mean I know there's the book on the Christian ethos which is available for students to get. I would say that we do have on the very first session for the first years, as part of their induction week [chaplain's name] comes along and the chaplaincy team and they do give a brief about the Christian foundation and the role of the chaplaincy team and they are there to support absolutely everybody regardless of their faith orientation. There is a source of wellbeing support. So we do emphasise that at the forefront in the very first session.

...

Q How is that link made visible, how would you say it is made visible?

A I think we are starting to make that link more visible by actually having days, like the day that we had in the last term that was run by [chaplain's name] from the Chaplaincy and it was looking at how to make that Christian foundation stronger within the university. I do like the fact that all of the degree congregations are held at the university [sic] I do like the carol service, it brings the community together for Christian worship. [CG3 University tutors]

## Inclusion and diversity

A It is interesting. I think something that is special about [CG university 4] is that there is the freedom to express that faith, particularly faith based aspect in your language if you want to, as well as people sharing the values whether they are practising Christians or not. What I would say about a school that I have worked in in the past was that as a practising Christian I was not allowed in any way to use any kind of vocabulary that might refer even to values, and if anything there were certain things like we didn't celebrate Christmas for example in this very multi-cultural school in [location], because the head teacher was so frightened that she might receive a backlash from parents of other faiths within the school, so it never happened.

A And also the subtlety, the openness to supporting students of other faiths. We have a high, I haven't got the data so wouldn't know, but I think we have a large proportion of students, Muslim students who choose to come here because of the shared ethos. [CG4 university tutors]

A Where we actually seek to develop the different stages in the life and I think when people actually work together as a community then the energy is strengthened and without people thinking they might think that they're not involved in their faith anymore but they still have that sense of who they are and who the people are and how we work together as a community.

A In terms of that type of activity. I feel much more supported here by the management than I think I would do if I was at a non-faith university  
[CG1 university tutors]

A One of the things that we discussed I think I mentioned to you earlier was once a day an event we discussed did you go to a church school and we were amazed at how many of the staff sitting there we were church school kids both of us weren't we, you are? So all around the table here went to a church school, all Christian but different, mine was high C of E. and I think it's a matter of where you feel comfortable, ... somehow it's like home and you've been raised if you like with that ethos and you then give that back.  
[CG1 university tutor]

A I think to pick up on what [tutor name] said as well, we celebrate diversity really in terms of we don't pigeonhole a person and say this is what the ideal teacher looks like, this is what the ideal personality is for teaching. We accept that not everyone is jazz hands, some people are quiet, and the whole range in between, and we celebrate that, we want that for teachers, we want diversity.  
[CG5 university tutor]

Q Here's one to challenge you then, anything you've said so far that could be linked back to the fact that [CG3 University] has got a Christian foundation?

A I was asked that question at interview. And I was stumped by it, as somebody who's a fallen away Christian, call me what you want. And I talked about it from a non-religious point of view about basically what we've heard earlier today about that care, about that nurturing, in an environment yes it is a religious whatever you want to call it, but for me it was wider than just religion, it was about that philosophy, about caring and so on.  
[CG3 university tutor]

## 'I think it's really about humanity'

A I don't want to get too ponsy, but talking about reconciliation and ethos and I think we're talking about things that are removed from the physical and removed from the technisistic, almost sort of transcendental kind of aspects to this that I think we have more freedom to think about here than we do in other institutions.  
[CG1 university tutor]

Q So you've mentioned a few times the values, the values of this institution. What are the values, in your own words?

A I think it's about being human, really, isn't it.

A Yes.

A And being flawed and knowing your flaws and accepting them and you know...

A That's exactly isn't it.

A Not being frightened of making mistakes.

A Yes. I think it's having a sense of humour as well. And also the overriding thing is the ability to be truthful about how you're feeling or which way you want to go.

.....

A helping them to meet the standards, firstly, so that they can qualify as a teacher. But going beyond that it's about the impact they're going to have on children in the future and to be aware of the kinds of values that they have and the kind of behaviours that they have and how they impact on children.

A It's also I think learning without blame, I think. When things get very challenging and somebody sees something which has gone wrong and the knee jerk reaction is whose fault is it, that's your fault. And actually that doesn't help because what that does is make a person feel quite threatened, it diminishes them, it diminishes their personhood.

[CG4 university tutors]

A I think it's really about humanity, I think that what I feel that we do on the secondary PGCE quite a lot is to sort of counter a rather Ofsted driven, data driven, assessment driven philosophy of this is what school is about. You know, you've got to get the results, you've got to train people to pass the exams, this is what it's all about. And we are almost, we are sort of providing a counter to that of saying yes but education is about more than that, surely

A So I am going to sound quite old fashioned here! My own philosophy is about getting students to understand children and to get them to be child centred, that's my philosophy. And perhaps I am singing on my own a little bit, or increasingly in the world of school that we operate in at the moment.

[CG2 university tutors]

A For me I think it's that phrase 'going beyond'. In a way that almost sums up [CG5 university] for me, the training, because it's things like the enrichment and all the extra support and everything that everybody puts into that mix it creates a whole person, it shows I think what we convey, whether explicitly or we just do it implicitly I don't really know, but I think what we convey perhaps because we believe it, is that becoming a teacher is much more than that set of standards. They are important, but a teacher is a whole person beyond them.

[CG5 university tutor]

A I think it's knowing the students so well, and providing a personalised education rather than training. We

have a saying here that the students are not just a number, they're a name. Because the systems are in place and the ethos and the staff relationships I think it's very much about students feeling security in us and in the product as well and we want to do our best for them.

[CG1 University tutor]

## The Christian foundation

Q It's coming out really quite strongly this care, the nurture, the support. So to focus back a little bit on the teacher and the trainees now, how would anything of what you've said and talked about relate to the fact that is a Christian foundation as a university?

A I think it embodies the Christian values to be honest, I think they are the Christian values that you see. We have the chaplaincy team who are also part of it and I refer students to the chaplaincy if they need over and above what we're able to do, there is that element of it. I think the embodiment of the values really sums it up for me.

A and I think that the fact that at Christmas, I know it's anecdotal but we have a sing song, carols with chaplaincy at [school name] and the last couple of years we've had at the cathedral we've had a Christmas carol service and it's the most lovely evening because lots of the education students are participants in it and it's that kind of coming together of staff and students, and it's really important. And it's about the acknowledgement that we are part of a bigger community that is not just part of the wider university but we're part of the cathedral. You know and that's cemented from being in the carol service to graduation and that sense of being in a Christian community.

A And yet because you know, it's not kind of felt that you have to be a Christian, you have to be part of that. If you're not part of that Christian community as such you don't feel an outsider.

A Absolutely right.

A If I am going to be really honest I think it's an area that maybe is underplayed. It's an area that we could develop because it's not, you know, some of our students are not aware of the chaplaincy and the chaplains ...  
[CG5 university tutors]

A I think sort of having worked in church schools as well and non-church schools, I think there is often an ethos that's in those schools that's developed over years and years. And something about its foundation, whether or not it's very evident in its practice as here, I don't think you'd say that it was overly evident in what we do. ...

A I wonder if we attract some students who have, because there is that connection, I think we attract some people who have rather fundamentalist Christian views which I have to say I struggle with any fundamentalist view. And if I'm thinking about students who are the ones who are resisting the messages that many of us are trying to put over, those are the students who usually are more resistant to ideas about LGBT, about different religions, about diversity in general. I see that connection, so that concerns me.

A But that's always been for me, that [CG2 university] has always historically been a teaching institution, it's never historically been a Christian teaching institution or a cathedral linked teaching institution. It's always been teaching.

[CG2 university tutors]

Q You've given quite a wide, quite a deep picture of what teacher training is here. To come back to where we started, how does that root within the Christian foundation do you think?

A Well it is about the person, whole person. It's not just about academic excellence, it is about I think it's who you are, but I will say personally to me it is about that spiritual side, and emotional, moral side, ethical side as much as the academic excellence side and bridging and bringing those two aspects together....

A Sorry can I just add something else in? The whole kind of mission statement of the university, about transforming society through education, sometimes I think it's in certain things through ITE and sometimes it's distinctly hidden within dust clouds or something, it is the very essence of what I as an educator, as a teacher and as a learner, all angles, I think I would wholeheartedly sign up to that view, because it makes sense to me. ...

Q That's really interesting. I am going to throw a different question in now. Is anything of what you've said so far, could you link that back to the fact that this is a Christian foundation university? And how?

A Just the values. But that's across all religions I think, morality, moral values I think.

A I think it comes from us as teachers. I think what this institution does allow is allow an exploration of this kind of thinking and reflection. So there is, you're allowed, you expect there's an allowance there. And also if people have faith and there's also a vernacular, there's a language through which they can also express that, these ideals and these feelings. But I think it's about education, I think I would say it's also specifically I think in some elements around teacher education, because it's just part of our course work and part of our study.

[CG3 university tutors]

## Partnership

Q Is that the mentors in school?

A Yes they're school based mentors and the staff in schools, because our understanding of partnership goes back to what [name ] said at the beginning, you know, partnership is at the core of what we do.  
[CG5 university tutor]

A So we do actually have a very open partnership even though we've got a Catholic faith background we've got a diverse number of partnerships with many schools, children of faith and those children who have not had the opportunity to belong to a faith. And we think because of that we've got the long term established links, expertise and networks that help us to develop the young teachers or mature teachers to understand what the needs are out there and to give them the skills to manage it using the various expertise within the university, but with also open networks too.  
[CG1 university tutor]

Q So there's a strong connection between schools and...?

A I think the school aspect is key. We were talking last week to a new colleague who is coming in, and we said that we actually have more offers than places, which isn't indicative of the partners that we are very closely with in this area of [locality], and we know that is an indicator of how the schools view [CG4 ] students and that's the thing that I feel we really need to protect, because it's our schools that we serve. We talk about school led provision, not in an ideal ...?[3.24] sense but in a real sense, in a methodological sense, yes schools do lead what we do. But they are also guided by ourselves in that, and it's that collaboration that I think is really what makes us successful.  
[CG4 university tutor]

# 5. Overall findings

## Trust

The significance of a basic trust in CathedralsGroup institutions was apparent from a multitude of sources. This was expressed when students identified a teacher or relative alumni who recommended that they come to the CG university or they knew it was a sound educator of teachers. This was a trust in the established tradition of the teacher education institution. It was also the case that trust was held due to shared values, whether they were expressed in explicitly religious terms or in implicit commonly shared terms.

A powerful expression of this trust was indicated by the expectation of quality. In some institutions this was an expectation of students coming from the university on placement, but in all institutions this was strongly expressed in terms of an attitude towards CG applicants for jobs, and also, to a smaller extent, in terms of the qualities those applicants would bring. They were viewed as a more reliable safe bet at application stage and a high quality source of educated teachers. A lack of trust was expressed towards those applicants from school-based routes from out of area, and less trust was expressed towards alternative local providers.

## Individuality, creativity and school corporate integration

A number of student participants spoke strongly of their sense of the programmes supporting their own search for becoming their own teacher. In some institutions this was repeated by tutors - something their tutors reinforced which schools both discerned and appreciated. In some cases, curriculum choice allowed for individualized pathways through the education of teachers, allowing for individual preferences for areas of specialism to be pursued. There was a sense of individualism and also a 'more than the standards' culture. This sometimes sounded like a rejection of central government agendas but was often expressed positively in terms of holistic education and the idea of educating the person at the centre.

A second strand was about integration, in terms of philosophy of education, into school identity or community education identity. This was expressed more strongly by some university tutors and, in many cases, schools. How it was expressed differed. Some schools were concerned that students should integrate into the institution's moral educational vision, and so adaptability mattered. They did not want students to bring such a definitive moral educational framework that could not be shaped into the school's own vision, but they wanted them to be able to engage with a moral vision.

Where there was a distinctive religious ethos, this differed subtly in that there was a stronger sense of a shared educational vision between university and school that students were entering into, a strongly community sense of a particular moral vision. Again, an individualistic moral identity was not a desired feature in candidates but rather an ability to engage with a common identity.

This presents a complex issue around the extent to which student teachers are encouraged to think they will freely explore and find their own moral educational vision and the extent to which they should be able to adopt the moral vision of the school.

## The elements of partnership

Among the group, institutions adopt different relationships with their partnership schools. In one case there was a very strong, unambiguous sense that the university served schools of a Christian character and that it sought to strongly support that particular sector. There were also clear examples when the main thrust of partnership engagement was for all schools, with no particular preference with any 'sub sector' of Christian schools. And there was an example of an institution that adopted a mid-way position. These relational extensions were mirrored back by the school perceptions. So, a more explicitly Christian institutional culture was met by a more strongly expressed preference for that culture by schools, although this was not found among students. In many institutions students did not demonstrate the strength of positive feeling about Christian foundation, that was shown by university tutor and school participants. This might reflect the significant generational change in association with religion that is well documented elsewhere, whereby young people are far less likely to express an association with Christianity than older people. Studies have shown that a higher proportion of staff working in education indicate that they are Christian but were that to deteriorate as the next generation of teachers took up positions in schools and faculties of education, it might be more challenging for Christian foundation universities to confidently assert a Christian dimension to their values and ethos.

## Distinctive provision, ethos and values

The survey data suggests that the general professional course, commonly called professional studies, is where the ethos and values of teacher education is most commonly thought to be located. Professional is associated with professionalism and values. However, the individual institutions showed particular profiles which expressed themselves in the curricula. In one institution a global citizenship course was identified as a location of content that really mattered, that went beyond the national standards. In another institution, a course with Christian content was identified as being particularly important for the school networks the institution had a particular responsibility to support. In a third institution a strong emphasis on special education needs and a particularly inclusive philosophy of education characterised the ethos.

Where there was a strong coherence between student perceptions, tutor perceptions and school perceptions about the value of these modules, there was also a distinctive curricula thread that was identified by all categories of participants. It was also visibly prominent in the documentation. A distinctive curricula location for the expression of values seemed to underpin the extent to which those values were felt to be translated into the shaping of the teachers. The core compulsory component of teacher education courses is identified as the place to find values.

There were two striking examples where particular modules, that in different ways reached beyond the national standards, took on a force of significance for the institutions that had them (mentioned above). Both seem to hold the heart of what tutors deeply believed mattered most and both successfully engaged with the wider school community. It is notable that in one case, the module had a distinctively Christian core component and in the other case the module a strong values and moral dimension which was not explicitly Christian but could arguably have been implicitly Christian.

For some tutors and schools, the location of the values of the curriculum was most strongly found in the professional studies generic component of the course. This was where the philosophy of education was found, the philosophy of teaching and learning, and the understanding of who or what the learner is. In some cases schools specifically identified this as if it was a defining feature of what they thought was strong about the university educated teacher.

The sense of a clear identity, expressed in a particular curriculum formulation that is wider and deeper than the standards, has an important impact in terms of distinguishing the teacher education course and providing a point of convergence of ideas about why and how teachers are educated.

'Distinctive' caused problems. Participants found it difficult to manage the word distinctive – It could mean different things: 'different from', or 'a characterizing feature of'. The 'distinctively Christian' narrative was problematic. Participants worry that distinctive is code for 'better than', and then find it difficult to discuss other institutions if they have not worked in or with any other. The research did not set out to compare different kinds of institutions (beyond the Cathedrals Group) but rather the perceptions of those who worked in and with CG institutions. There was a nervousness about commenting comparatively but those who had experience of different institutions had much more to say about that difference and it commonly weighed in favour of the CG group institutions. Some university tutors spoke of the decision to choose a CG institution over another, or to return to it after being with another. If Christian universities are by some measure 'better' than others, there is some sense that to assert this is unbecoming or arrogant but for those who have experienced the different institutional cultures there is much greater confidence in directly identifying this difference in positive terms. Perhaps this also reflected an underlying nervousness about correlating Christianity with moral superiority.

A number of tutors specifically linked Christian values to particular traits they interpreted in their programmes and provision. The anthropology of the learner (our phrase), the distinctive value of the human person and the narrative of failure and forgiveness were clearly identified in the responses of tutors, as well as a sense of a human flourishing being a part of what their programmes sought to promote. This essential Christian frame was articulated again and again by tutors, irrespective of their own faith perspective or whether or not their thought their institutions were explicitly Christian in self identification.

## The Christian foundation question

In the process of any research project, when in conversation with participants it becomes apparent to the researcher whether there is an essential area of inner understanding, thoughts and feelings that the participant is positive about expressing (whether or not those things are in themselves positive). Everyone we spoke to had things to say about how they felt about the institution, its identity and values, but the specific topic of the Christian foundation generated a specific family of responses. Some made critical observations, for example of how they had to navigate the interview 'Christianity question'. Amongst students and schools, long pauses were common after we asked about the university's Christian foundation. In some cases the participants were clearly challenged about making any association between what they saw and experienced as Christianity. They could easily discuss values and principles but not Christianity. We experimented with this question because of the long pause phenomena. It did not matter when we asked it. Amongst university tutors there were more articulate and confident replies though they expressed diverse views. One university tutor felt it was better not to talk about it, and others quickly were able to express in some detail their theological self understanding of their work in the institution. Others still expressed a different non-religious values narrative. Some felt particularly positive about this and had a great deal to say about it; it was something that had mattered in their choice of institution.

Bringing up the question of what they thought about the Christian foundation led to explicit articulation of the participant's own religious/belief position. Asking about the Christian foundation led to a reflection on identity (school, student or staff member). One feature that seems to have come over strongly was the length of connection with the institution. The longer the participant spent with the institution, the more they had to say about the Christian foundation in part because they could discern change with it becoming more or less explicit over time, and also because they had a deeper sense of the different dimensions of the institution's culture.

There was a great deal of discussion around diversity and inclusiveness. Some Christian tutors specifically identified a different positive experience working in a CG institution when contrasted with other institutions where talk or expression of faith and values was discouraged or even prohibited. Some specifically spoke of their experience of feeling included and having space, though they were not or no longer a Christian. There were tutors in almost all of the institutions who gave specific examples of how the Christian dimension of the institution linked to the inclusion and support of staff and students of all faiths, and they commented that some students with religious backgrounds chose the university for that reason and this was repeated by students in some institutions. On a few occasions staff spoke with concern that they might sometimes recruit or attract religious students who they found difficult to teach due to those students' strong religious beliefs. In these cases the visible Christian dimension was viewed as a possible magnet for undesirables – although this comment came from a member of staff working at an institution which largely downplayed any sense of being a Christian one.

Some tutors thought the Christian dimension was not very present, others saw signs of an increasing presence, a more visible Christian ethos, whilst some maintained that the institution had a long history of a strong Christian ethos and that ethos continued in the present. This varied widely across the institutions.

## 6. Recommendations for the future

1. CG institution staff and school partners have strong feelings about faith and values in relation to their institutions. All CG institutions are encouraged to find further opportunities for an ongoing conversation about the relationship between individual staff and the institution's community and corporate ethos and identity. It is clear that the participants valued the opportunity to explore their thinking on this and that inviting conversation on these topics reveal significant and sometimes unexpected responses.
2. In addition to encouraging spaces for conversation, CG institutions are encouraged to look at the vocabulary and narrative of that conversation, in particular seeking to shape more precisely the language of values, actions and virtues in the provision of teacher education, and its relation to the narrative around the Christian foundation. This might also include references to implicit and explicit dimensions and the contribution of specific insights from particular traditions to shared or overlapping values.
3. CG institutions should be confident in articulating an identity and a community space that is positive towards public expression and dialogue about faith and belief of all kinds. Whilst some will prefer to associate with a more secular identity, there is a clear preference for open inclusion of faith talk, rather than any de-religionised exclusion. This might help students make sense of the value their schools and university place on the Christian dimension of the work (whether that is expressed in terms of religion or values). This requires a confident articulation of how plural and diverse spaces require the particular to be valued, as well as a good understanding of the different ways spaces might be secular, be they open and inclusive, or closed and totalising. To be willing to celebrate and welcome diversity, there is a necessity to be able to identify the value of different expressions of belief and what they bring. Sometimes these are seen as an oppositional binary, which they are not.
4. CG institutions are encouraged to reflect more deeply about the person-centred, service ethos in teaching, and the implicitly Christian values which clearly underpin philosophies many in education use. The dignity of the human person as a being of worth beyond price, the hope of the possibility of the next generation of those taught, and the hope of the possibility of change for the good, all seem to underpin the work of teacher education, and have a particular resonance with a Christian narrative. This is perhaps more clearly seen when one considers what might have been expressed; the biological determinism found in some educational regions was noticeably absent, for instance, as were proponents of elitism in schooling. There is some vulnerability in how Christian foundation universities engage in 'customer' or 'consumer' language, given the rise of individual student fees.

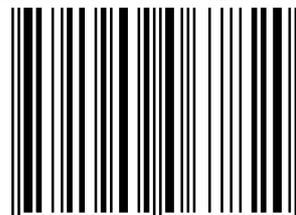
5. It is clear that for many CG institutions there is significant support from the Church schools sector, and some have a clear idea of where and how they support teachers in preparation for that sector. Others have less obvious provision for preparing teachers for this sector. The need to balance general preparation for work in any school and preparation for work in the Church sector needs to be carefully judged but there seems to be scope within the pathways available for a clearer identification and articulation of the pathway to work in the Church school sector. Anglican foundation institutions should review opportunities for a nationally recognised accredited component within ITE in collaboration with school and diocesan stakeholders.
6. All CG institutions should reflect on how they are seen as the source of experts and expertise which was more strongly expressed by schools and students than university tutors or course documentation. There is an intellectual academic justification for the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in the university and there is also a Christian justification. We suggest that CG institutions be bolder in their own claims about their pursuit of knowledge to find the best ways to educate teachers and the best ways to help learners learn. The value of knowledge and knowing the best ways to teach is clearly a motivation for schools and students. It might be this presents some degree of challenge to the more individual notion of teacher that was more commonly present. Should CG institutions be encouraging new teachers to discover the teacher they want to be, or be the best kind of teacher? Should the definition of 'best' engage with questions of who is taught – who deserves it most: the most needy, everyone, a particularly valued sub group, those who can afford it?
7. CG institutions should review where in their curricula they locate and explore their philosophy of education. This could be more strongly asserted and communicated. When these curricula components were explicitly and strongly identified, stakeholders were positive. Schools, university staff and students expressed strongly their care about values, key ideals and principles but they were not always articulated clearly in public documentation and curricula.







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