

## **PARISHES AND SCHOOLS WORKING TOGETHER**

### **HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE**

This is selection of ideas to help churches think through how they could work with local schools and what they could offer to develop a vibrant relationship rooted in the Gospel. Some of the ideas have been developed with church schools in mind; many could be used or adapted for any school. They are ideas that have been successful and are drawn from practical experience. Your churches may have better ones or be trying new things already!

You could just read through the list below and let it set you thinking

It would be better to share it with a group of people, especially your PCC and ministerial team, cluster, mission community, deanery, ecumenical group etc.

If you are working with a group of people, why not start by asking them to tick just the five most obvious things that they *know* is already happening (there will probably be more than five!)? See if people agree on the five!

Perhaps, then identify five more things that they think your church community *could* helpfully do and sustain. Try to choose the five that are *most* appropriate or valuable in your situation. It might be best to do this in pairs or small groups. When you come together again, list all the suggestions and then prioritise them. Agree to work on the *top* five. Spend some time then working out what each might mean in practice and agree on who will do what to implement them. Or you might think of better things not in this list!

Make sure that you agree together when you will review progress and, perhaps, consider five more ideas. Why not encourage all the parishes in your Deanery to do the exercise, and then set aside time at your Deanery Synod to share what everyone is doing and planning to do – especially where some schools serve more than one parish?

Tim Elbourne  
Diocesan Director of Education

### **I. PRAYER**

1. Include the School community regularly in public intercession.
2. Establish a Prayer / Support Group for the School.
3. At least one parish holds a monthly prayer event/group *in school* for governors, parents, teachers, clergy and teachers to join together.
4. Include school and people involved in Parish Prayer Cycle and include relevant school news and needs in Diocesan Prayer Calendar.

### **WORSHIP**

1. Plan joint worship occasions between church and school in both places.

2. Establish a School Eucharist.
3. Include the school in special services for mid-week Festivals, Patronal Festival;
4. Hold regular 'open' collective worship occasions in school, to which adults are invited.
5. Establish a joint parish/ school choir, music group.
6. Invite children who are learning instruments to play them in church.
7. Encourage parish musicians to support music in school and school worship.
8. Establish a core of hymns, song and liturgy that will be used in worship in both church and school.
9. Encourage the school to use quality and up-to-date Collective Worship resources (readily available online or in print).
10. Establish Education Sunday as a major opportunity for church and school to come together, using material circulated to parishes each year.
11. Organise training jointly for worship leaders in church and school.

## **I.ACTIVITIES**

1. Offer an After-School Club in school run by the church.
2. Establish a holiday club/ playscheme.
3. Find ways to integrate Sunday School/ All Age Worship and School programmes.
4. Share your parish's world church links with the school or vice versa.
5. Run a joint Church/ School Christian Aid Week effort – give it an educational as well as fund-raising dimension.
6. Organise jointly a Christmas Toy or Shoe-Box Appeal.
7. Help create spaces for teaching staff to reflect and take stock and the congregations to reflect theologically on the tasks of education.
8. Plan an annual Parish/School Day on which parish members visit and plan activities in school.
9. Find ways of listening to children's perspectives of church/ Christian faith.
10. Encourage good flow of news through school page in parish magazine, church contribution to school newsletter etc.
11. Establish an 'Open the Book' group ([www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book))

## **I.THE CHURCH BUILDING**

1. Enable children and staff to meet the living church community as well as see the churchyard and church building!
2. Ensure classes which visit are personally and warmly welcomed.
3. Encourage some church members to become 'church hosts', visiting and meeting children in school prior to church visit, so that there are friendly known faces.
4. Ensure there are friendly church members in church at times when children visit, perhaps simply doing routine tasks.
5. Take the initiative in hosting a visit from a school.
6. Ask church members to "share their Christian story" when children visit.
7. Devise - perhaps with school specialists - suitable written materials/ worksheets for when school classes visit – emphasising the Christian journey as well as church features.
8. Make or find appropriate opportunities in the church event diary to which to specially invite children and their families e.g. Christingle.
9. Find ways for lay Christians as well as clergy to share faith experience in appropriate ways with children in school – perhaps in RE or Collective Worship.
10. Have regular displays of school children's work in church.

11. Work with children to make an altar frontal, banners, vestments etc for the church.
12. Church and school together organise a church based activity day for all the school community. Make it an ecumenical venture and include the whole village or neighbourhood.

## **I. MINISTRY**

1. See ministry to the school as a whole parish responsibility, not just the job of the clergy.
2. Include the school in the parish Mission Statement and mission planning.
3. Encourage people to become school governors – especially Foundation Governors – and make sure they know you value this lay ministry.
4. Ensure there is feedback from Governors and a regular 'school' item on the PCC agenda.
5. Co-opt the Headteacher to the PCC (but don't expect him/her to come each time!).
6. Engender a "culture of affirmation" of the work of the teachers in your local school.
7. Recognise and support church members who are involved in school life (as paid staff or volunteers) – not just in the local school.  
Include learning about Church Schools in the parish teaching programme.  
Organise pastoral training and support for adults involved in school.
8. Nurture vocations to the teaching profession and affirm and support church members who are teachers.
9. Organise or co-ordinate support for parents and "parenting".
10. Liaise with school over dates and planning of 'big events' (fêtes, fund-raising etc.) – perhaps including some joint events.
11. Are there other adults who could offer spare time to the school (from painting to hearing children read)?
12. Encourage a Parent Teacher Association to become 'Friends of the School' so that it becomes open to the wider community (inc. the church).
13. Make sure your school knows about the many diocesan resources available to it.