

Churches Together in England

LINKING CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

Gillian Wood

Free Church Education Officer
Churches Together in England

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LINKING

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS

This booklet is designed to encourage links between churches and local schools: to encourage churches who have no involvement with schools to begin on this exciting venture and to encourage others to continue and even extend their involvement.

Whilst the focus is on building bridges with community schools (formerly county schools), the ideas and actions are also relevant to church schools and independent/private schools.

Why get involved?

Churches as organisations and their members as individuals have always seen involvement in public education as important. It is part of our role in society and a means of bringing Christian values to bear on the provision, nature and conduct of education. Through education, both formal and informal, children, young people and adults develop and grow in body, mind and spirit and each should have the opportunity and encouragement to develop to the full the potential God has given them. Thus it is to share in God's work that Christians become involved in schools, not to proselytise but by being concerned for our neighbour's whole well-being.

Involvement with schools is part of our Christian calling, following the example of Christ as seen in Jesus' concern for children (Matt 19. 13; Mark 10. 13-16; Luke 18. 15-20), in Jesus' challenge to Peter to "Feed my Lambs" (John 21. 15-19) and in Jesus' call to serve others (Matt 25. 31-40).

Both churches and schools have a common concern - they want the best for all young people. Churches and schools are part of the local community and work for the good of that community; churches become involved with schools as good neighbours, sharing concern for the young and the vulnerable. In serving others, Christians are serving Christ; and so in serving schools and the children and adults in them, Christians are offering service to their Lord.

Churches can be a resource for schools in helping them meet the requirements of the law. The law requires that all maintained schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all children which promotes their spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Schools fulfil this through teaching the National Curriculum and Religious Education and through other activities within the school day. In all of these tasks, there are opportunities for churches to help schools in the education of children and young people.

Are you already involved informally?

You probably already have school links through the people who make up your church:

teachers,
governors,
headteachers,
lunch time supervisors,
dinner ladies,
school nurses,
school secretaries,
school caretakers,
classroom assistants,
school crossing wardens,
school librarians,
cleaners,
parents,
grandparents,
pupils,
learner mentors,
advisors,
inspectors,
SACRE¹ members,
Local Education Authority staff,
school Christian workers,
Parent Teacher Association members,
assembly teams
or perhaps your minister takes school assemblies.

..... This is not an exhaustive list!

¹ See section on SACREs (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education)

Turning the informal into the formal

Before making contact with a school, you need to find out what skills, availability and degree of inclination there is in the church. This could be done by arranging a meeting for all those who already have some school link but opening it to all who are interested in schools. You may be surprised at hidden talents - don't forget to ask pupils and students too. Use the meeting as an opportunity to brainstorm ideas about what schools need and which local school would be best to contact first. The **Scripture Union website** has good ideas for this initial meeting as does the book *Generation to Generation*. (For details of all resources see Resource Section at the back of this booklet.)

At the end of your meeting, you need to decide on some specific areas of support you could offer to a school, who would be involved and whether they need training. Taking assemblies or leading Collective Worship and visiting church buildings are what schools will expect but there are other opportunities, as you will see later.

You also need to decide which school you should first approach. But before you do so first check whether any other church or Christian group already has links with the school. It may be you can work together, or it may be appropriate to select another school. Don't forget special schools and independent/private schools too.

Once you have one or two "offers of support" and decided which school to approach, then the contact with the head of the school needs to be done formally, preferably by the church minister or leader. If you have chosen a school with which you have informal links through a teacher or governor, they may like to let the Head know that the approach will be made.

In the meeting with the headteacher remember that the business of schools is education and that headteachers are busy. Use the meeting to introduce the church and its willingness to be of assistance to the school. Find out what ways the school would like to work with you as well as making the offers already agreed upon.

Be prayerful, be prepared, be patient and courteous and expect to develop a positive link with the school which can begin small and then grow as knowledge and trust develop in both sides. Go for it!

What can we do?

Remember that the relationship between a school and a church can be a long one. Therefore do not rush into the project too quickly or try to do too much too soon.

It is important to offer help which the school needs and which you know that as a church, collectively or as individuals, you can deliver. Remember some options need a long-term, regular commitment, whilst others may be only once a year.

Opportunities for the church to offer to the school include:

- ◆ Visits to the church buildings as part of the RE syllabus “Visits to local places of worship”.
- ◆ Use of the church premises for school Carol Service, Nativity Play, Harvest Festival, Leavers’ Service or just use of the premises for other school activities. Many schools are short of space and many church buildings are not fully used during the daytime.
- ◆ Take assemblies at school, including special assemblies at Christian festivals, Remembrance Day and Education Sunday. Why not invite members of the school - headteacher, teachers, pupils - to take part in Education Sunday at the church, or hold the Education Sunday services at the school instead of at church?
- ◆ Provide resources for the school, eg:
 - Bibles for class use
 - Christian books for the library and for the curriculum - **CLC** and **Stapleford Trust** can help with suggested titles
 - Videos - including *The Miracle Maker* and from the Millennium Dome *The Faithzone Videos*
 - Books for Assembly - see Resource Section for ideas
 - Knitted or sewn nativities -a task for church knitters/sewers.

For nursery schools offer *Get Ready Go* from Scripture Union for each child moving up to primary school. For primary schools offer *It’s Your Move* from Scripture Union for each pupil in Y6 moving on to secondary school.

Members of the church as individuals or groups of individuals working through the church could help the school in a voluntary capacity. Age is no barrier - you could even be an honorary grandpa/grandma! Again many of these activities require a long term commitment.

Volunteers could:

- Listen to children read.
- Take work experience students to their place of work.
- Provide extra pairs of hands for school excursions, clubs, sport, music, drama, visiting the local library, open days and special events.
- Offer practical help with gardens, maintenance or in the office - work parties to repair and decorate the school or create a school garden.
- Offer a regular time during the week to be a classroom volunteer willing to do "anything" under the supervision of the class teacher.
- Be interviewed by children as "living examples" of people with a Christian faith.
- Be interviewed about "the past" as part of KS2 History (World War Two)
- Join the Parent Teacher Association.
- Become a school governor.

And perhaps, most importantly, encourage Christians to consider becoming full time teachers. Schools need teachers - Christian teachers.

There are opportunities for schools to help and work together with churches:

- Churches may know of suitable recipients of school Harvest Festival gifts, or the school's harvest gifts could be brought into the church for a joint celebration.
- School choirs could share with the church in worship in homes for the elderly or in special church services.
- School choirs or drama productions could be invited to church activities as part of joint social outreach to the community, e.g. a school Christmas production as part of a special luncheon club event.
- Schools could be invited to share in other church events, e.g. Carol Services, Flower Festivals and church collections of supplies for Eastern Europe, or activities to raise money for famine relief, or the Christmas shoebox appeal. These could even be joint activities.
- Schools could be asked if their students/pupils could design posters/ service sheets/ notices for church events, perhaps as a design project. This could be a mutually beneficial activity.
- Churches could advertise school events and display children's work, perhaps after a class visit to the church buildings.
- Churches could carry items from the school in the church magazine - a report of activities done or to happen, examples of work pupils have done.

Don't forget the staff

- Chocolates, sweets or biscuits provided during Ofsted would be much appreciated at that stressful time.
- A letter or card of support and encouragement when Ofsted results or exam results are made known or league tables published, or when the school makes "the news".
- At the start of the school year a card or letter to wish them well and assure them of the church's support and prayers.



Above all: pray for the school

Church Visits

Local Agreed Syllabuses for Religious Education all encourage pupils to visit local places of worship. This is a ready way in which the church can help the school. It is not necessary to have a traditional place of worship since every building says something about the people who meet there; but whatever your church is like, it is essential to set the visit up properly. These visits can be most helpful in building on-going relationships with the school. A church's commitment to careful preparation and the maintenance of a worshipful atmosphere will make such visits a particularly important part of the pupils' spiritual development.

Before receiving a group of pupils on a visit, you should plan carefully with the school. You need to discover the school's aims for the visit so that you can prepare activities and materials suitable for the age group and the purpose of their visit. It is important for the pupils to appreciate that the church is the people and the building is where they worship. You need well-briefed members of the church to be available to take part in the visit, and others to pray for and during the visit. It is also helpful to prepare resources which relate to your church and your denomination, e.g. a plan of the church, activity sheets specifically created for your building, a video, a special service (e.g. baptism, infant dedication). If there is to be a talk, then acetates illustrating different aspects of the church, its history, worship, activities, people, furniture, weddings would help. The church notice board and display tables of literature will also reflect the life and activities of the church and its related organisations, home and overseas. Some churches use guided tours, others have church members in different areas to talk to each group about that particular area and, if appropriate, to demonstrate its use, e.g. the baptistery, lectern, font. There are many approaches and your denomination may provide guidelines on receiving school visits, e.g. **Salvation Army's *The Ultimate Church Visit***.

Remember too the practical points: why are they coming; how many pupils and adults; when and for how long; label the toilets; will there be refreshments and where, and who will organise; and give the pupils time to be still and silent to appreciate being in a special place of worship.

Do a follow-up with the school and church members to find out what went right/wrong/and what could be improved. Ask if any of the children's work during the visit or linked to it when back at school could be displayed at the church. Thank everyone for participating and ask them to come again.

NB: If your church has a graveyard, then it may also provide the opportunity for school visits relating to local history, nature conservation and ecology.

Prayer

Prayer is the most significant contribution churches can make to our schools. If all the adults working in and for the school feel supported and valued, then the whole school environment can be affected for good and children will have a positive experience of school. Children and young people in schools will have many and varied needs and perhaps no other prayer support. God is interested in all of our lives: that includes school and all that happens there.

Remember schools in public prayer at the beginning and end of term, on Education Sunday, at exam time, and when there are special events at the school. This could create a pattern of public prayer with schools mentioned about once a month as well the special focus on Education Sunday. **Christians at Sheffield Schools** have some useful leaflets for praying in church groups. Many school Christian workers provide a prayer diary. **The Christians in Schools Trust** in Stockport has a helpful prayer guide on its website.

There may be a group of people who are called to pray for a particular school in a regular, sustained way. They could be from one church or from several churches all having links with that school. The **Scripture Union website** has helpful guidance on setting up a school prayer group. Remember to tell the headteacher what is happening or there may be misunderstandings; but you may well be amazed at the response.

The **Schools Prayer Network** exists to stimulate and encourage committed Christian prayer for every school in the UK, and to provide a means of communication and support for those involved. The Network maintains a record of all schools in the UK and notes which ones are registered as being supported by a prayer group. If you are going to set up a prayer group for a school, it would be useful to check with the school and with the Network if there is an existing group known to either

Remember to pray for schools - it's the least and most you can do.

Working together

Churches working together can give a united Christian witness to the local schools and can consider bigger ventures than may be possible for a single church. It is helpful to schools if the churches in the area from all different traditions can be seen to be working together. Occasionally schools are reluctant to respond to the overtures of one church because of what they see as church rivalries or a sense that that particular church is on a “recruitment drive”. Even if churches work individually with schools, it is important to share this information at ministers’ meetings and in local Churches Together Groups so that everyone knows what is happening.

If churches can work together with the local schools, then much can be achieved. Initially, it would be helpful to share information on what links do exist and so co-ordinate work in a particular school or encourage new work to start in schools where there is no active church involvement. The local authority Religious Education adviser and the **SACRE** may be useful contacts as to where help is needed in a broader context in terms of Religious Education provisions, especially if there is a new syllabus.

In many areas the churches involved in schools work have come together to set up trusts to employ schools Christian workers. Some of these work directly in the schools. In others, the worker is a development officer who, although going into schools, has as a prime role the encouragement, nurture and training of volunteers from churches who then go into schools. Often this arrangement is in conjunction with **Scripture Union**, where the local churches provide the finance and the Scripture Union provides guidance and training.

Other Churches Together Groups have arranged for there to be an honorary chaplain for each school, after discussions both at the local ministers’ meetings and at lunches organised with local headteachers.

Some groups of churches have come together to form a Spire Group and have been trained by the **Spire Trust**. This Trust is a network of Christians from all walks of life who are prepared to help local secondary schools pupils in their moral and spiritual development. They help with assemblies, Religious Education, Personal and Social Education, seminars, visits and extra-curricular activities. Their aim is not to evangelise but to help pupils be better-informed about Christian beliefs and practices.

Local Churches Together Groups could celebrate all the local links between churches and schools by arranging ecumenical Education Sunday services.

Education Sunday

For well over a hundred years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England. It is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone in the world of education. The theme is devised by an ecumenical steering group representing different Christian denominations. For some years it has been celebrated on the ninth Sunday before Easter. Information about each year's theme is usually available in the preceding autumn from Church headquarters and websites.

Why not use Education Sunday as the opportunity to launch your new school-church link?



What more can we do?

As churches and schools establish mutual trust, it is possible to consider other ways of working together.

Churches in discussion with the local education authority and local schools have set up breakfast clubs, homework clubs, after-school clubs and computer clubs on church premises out of school hours, for the benefit of young people and with the support of the school. Such activities need much prior preparation and training. Sources of advice include the **Scripture Union** and denominational headquarters who may be able to link up churches or groups of churches with others who are already experienced in the work, as may the local authority or diocese.

In some areas, churches do important work amongst excluded pupils, or those at risk of exclusion. **Level 3 in Toxteth** and the **Zacchaeus Centre in Birmingham** are two examples. Churches considering this are advised first to study the report *Excluded but not rejected* published by Care for Education and the Evangelical Alliance in association with the Senior Volunteer Network (available on the Care for Education website).

Examples of churches working together in local schools include **The Spinnaker Trust** in South London; **Christians and Sheffield Schools**; **Kingston School and University Christian Work** and the **Pathway** in Barnet, Haringey and Enfield. The March 2002 issue of *Pilgrim Post*, the Churches Together in England newsletter, described how there is now a School Christian Worker for North West Shropshire due to churches working and praying together. There are many more groups - there may be one near you which you could support.

As church links grow with an individual school, personal relationships develop and ministers and others from the church may find themselves taken into the confidence of headteachers or individual teachers as they begin to act as chaplains to the staff. This pastoral role takes time to establish and is a position of great trust, but it is time well spent. It is also important to build in a team approach to provide continuity as personnel move.

Religious Education in Schools

Religious Education provides the opportunity for pupils to learn about religions and to learn from religions. It can also contribute to pupils' moral and spiritual development, to help them develop the ability to make well-informed reasoned judgements about moral issues, to reflect on ultimate questions, to develop the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions and to seek after truth.

Religious Education is part of the Basic Curriculum taught in all state schools. In community and some voluntary schools, this will be based on the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. In voluntary aided schools with a religious character, religious education must be conducted in accordance with the trust deed of the school. In church schools this will usually be achieved by following the appropriate diocesan syllabus.

The Local Authority Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. The local syllabus is prepared by a Conference set up by the local authority and consisting of four committees representing the local education authority, the teachers, the Church of England, the other Christian denominations and other faiths. Churches are likely therefore to have a representative of their own denomination at the Conference. That person or a representative of the LEA should be able to answer questions about the Syllabus and how churches can help schools implement it.

Churches can make a valuable contribution to the Religious Education of pupils by helping the schools fulfil the requirements of the Local Agreed Syllabus. They can make their buildings available for pupils to visit as local places of worship. In lessons, visitors from churches can bring an authentic Christian voice into the classroom as an essential part of Religious Education. Syllabuses is to offer opportunities for pupils to learn about Christianity as it is experienced today by the Christian Churches. Some ministers and schools Christian workers may be asked to become even more involved in the teaching of particular parts of the RE Syllabus.

Religious Education may not be a well-resourced area of the curriculum, even in secondary schools where there are specialist Religious Education teachers. So churches, after discussion with the school, may be able to provide resources to help in the teaching of Christianity. In some schools the resources needed are well-qualified Religious Education teachers: Churches can help by encouraging Christians to consider taking up this career.

Further details about Religious Education in schools can be found on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (**QCA**) website and on the websites of the Public Examination Providers for GCSE and A level syllabuses. The GCSE Short Course in Religious Education is an increasingly popular subject. The **Culham** website section *Clergy and RE* is a valuable site for all both lay and ordained people who wish to become involved in Religious Education in schools. **The RE site** is the website that links into all that is useful on the web about Religious Education.



" You're taking this lesson about David and Goliath very seriously ... "

Collective Worship

Community Schools and Voluntary Schools with no religious character are required to provide a daily act of collective worship which “shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”. This means it reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. In church schools collective worship will be within the tradition of that church. Every pupil in every school must attend an act of worship in school every day unless the pupils’ parents exercise their right to withdraw their children under the appropriate conscience clause.

Schools often use the term "Assembly" for this gathering of pupils but assemblies often include more than collective worship. In collective worship, pupils are offered opportunities for spiritual and moral development, including opportunities to join in with worship. Church visitors might present ideas and experience from their faith, making clear the value of these ideas and experiences within the community and asking pupils to think about them from their own points of view. In leading prayer, no assumptions should be made about the commitments of the pupils or staff: no religion advocates compulsory worship! For example, prayer can be introduced by offering pupils a choice between the role of participant and the role of observer. It is important to respect the views and integrity of the headteacher, staff and pupils.

It is important for church visitors who are asked to lead collective worship to prepare well in advance: ask for the school’s worship policy; talk to the worship coordinator, who may not necessarily be the headteacher; and if possible ask to visit an equivalent act of worship beforehand. It is also important to check practical issues; where it is held, where do the notices fit in, who attends and how long. In schools, timing is very important and seek to end just before time! You want to be invited back.

There is a great deal of guidance available for leading collective worship, both on different websites and in printed materials. Examples include the **Culham site** and the **National Society** (Church of England); **Stapleford, Christian Education, Blackburn Diocese** and **Assemblies** websites.

What is a SACRE?

All local authorities have to set up a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Its main function is to advise the local authority on matters relating to collective worship in community and some other schools and on Religious Education given in accordance with their Local Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE can also require the LEA to review its Agreed Syllabus. The SACRE is made up of four committees representing the Church of England, the other Christian denominations and other religions reflecting the principal religious traditions of the area, teachers, the local authority. Religious Education is a partnership between the local authority, teachers and faith communities, the only school curriculum subject treated in this way.

It would help churches in their work with schools if they made contact with their local SACRE and their representatives on it. SACRE representatives should act as the link between the SACRE and local church communities presenting concerns about the teaching of Religious Education and the delivery of collective worship in the local schools. SACRE meetings, usually once a term, are open meetings which members of the public are free to attend. The local authority will have details of times and venues.

Voluntary Christian Groups

Many schools have Christian clubs or meetings at lunchtime or after school which enable pupils to share their faith. They should be clear in their purpose and open in their agenda and invitation for all to participate. They are often run by school Christian workers, school staff or in secondary schools by older pupils. In many cases, the staff will not be RE staff but practising Christians who teach other subjects.

Visitors to such groups are participating in the life of the Christian community on school premises and should take the opportunity seriously. Even though the meetings are at lunchtime or after school, the arrangements for visitors to such groups should be made not only with the group, but also with senior staff in the school because the meeting is on school premises whilst the school is open. These groups may not call for much practical help from local churches, but they should be a focus for encouragement, support and prayer by all the churches in the area.

Supporting Teachers

The morale of teachers is crucial to the success of education. Churches should recognise that for many Christian teachers, as for other Christians, their daily job is also their ministry. If your church has people working in schools, they are part of your Christian outreach. If you have displays for the missionaries you support, why not those involved “in Christian service” at home, including teachers and others in schools and other areas or work? None of the work undertaken by teachers, headteachers, support staff or governors is easy and all of it is responsible. They all need to know that what they are doing is valued by the churches and local community. They need to feel that their schools and their own contribution is supported and upheld in prayer by their church.

Where church members are employed in school or are giving their time as governors, SACRE members, or volunteers, churches should take an interest in what they are doing so that prayer is specific and they are protected from being too-overburdened with church-related responsibilities. It may take some restraint to ensure that busy people are not forced to choose between their ministry in and for schools and their ministry in the church.

If churches support Schools Christian Workers, the support has to be nurtured by inviting them to visit the church and share their hopes and concerns and activities in person as well as through newsletters. This enables the churches to keep the vision and offer both prayerful and practical support. (For example, one schools worker has his base in the church office and in another area a church member provides part-time administrative back up.) The schools workers need to know that they have the active and prayerful support of their churches as well as the financial backing.

If a church can show how it positively values, encourages and supports teachers, then it could not only build up existing teachers but also encourage others to enter the profession. Churches need to find ways of developing, encouraging and affirming the vocation to teach in schools, not only amongst young people but also amongst those who have the maturity and experience of the world to offer, as well as other gifts for the children they will teach.

Schools need Christian teachers, now and in the future.

Legal Issues

The headteacher of a school is responsible for everything that happens in the classroom, in the school, and to school parties out on visits. Anyone visiting a school is there as a guest and is expected to conform to the patterns of behaviour set down by the school.

The class teacher is responsible for discipline and the health and safety of the pupils and should remain with the class at all times when on a visit or when there is a visitor in the classroom. At no time during their visit should a visitor expect to be left alone with an individual child or small group of children. Should any pastoral issues arise during conversation between a school visitor and a child in the school, they should be referred to the relevant member of staff at the earliest opportunity.



Anyone who wishes to work with children or young people at church or in school is strongly recommended to have a current Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau. The Local Education Authority may well make this a condition of "working" in a school. Churches should check with their denominational headquarters or their diocese as to the appropriate route to follow for their members to apply for Disclosures.

"I warned you this teacher was strict about talking in class."

Being Guests

Although schools are keen to receive help from the wider community, they are places of education run by professionals. The most effective way to be involved is to support the needs of the school and build up a relationship over time. Never use an invitation to overstep what is acceptable educationally. Respect the integrity of the school. Do not proselytise or you will never be invited back and it may take years before another Christian is allowed in.

Once you have built up a relationship with a school, do everything to maintain it. Be punctual, presentable, professional and check with the teachers what is acceptable in their classroom or hall. If you need equipment, ask for it before you get there or take your own.

There may be times when a church's commitment to evangelism and a school's concern for education about religion come into conflict. Schools should be places where meaning is explored and truth pursued in a safe environment. Unless it is a church school, work in the classroom about Christianity will be designed to enable pupils to know what Christians believe and what it may mean to be a Christian.

Remember that schools may include members of different faith groups, children from secular families and different Christian denominations. The Professional Council for Religious Education has drawn up a *Code of Conduct for Religious Believers Visiting Schools* which should be read by everyone going into schools from the churches. It can be summed up by asking the question: "If a member of another religion visited my child's school and contributed in the same way that I have done, would I, as a parent, be happy with the education given?"

Church Schools

For some churches, the link to a local school is already established by the presence of their own church school. About a third of schools in England, mainly primary, are church schools; the majority are Church of England, but a substantial number are Roman Catholic, about 60 are Methodist primary schools, some of which are joint with the Church of England. The move to more ecumenically-based schools was encouraged by Lord Dearing's Report *The way ahead: Church of England schools in the new millennium*. There are a few schools with a Free Church foundation and the Greek Orthodox Church opened its first voluntary aided primary school in September 2000. In addition, there are independent schools with church or Christian foundations.

Every church school represents a considerable commitment in time and money by the local church community to enable it to come into being and continue in existence. But such commitment is rewarded by the church school providing a witness to Christ through the quality of the education it provides for the community and the way in which it makes this motivation clear.

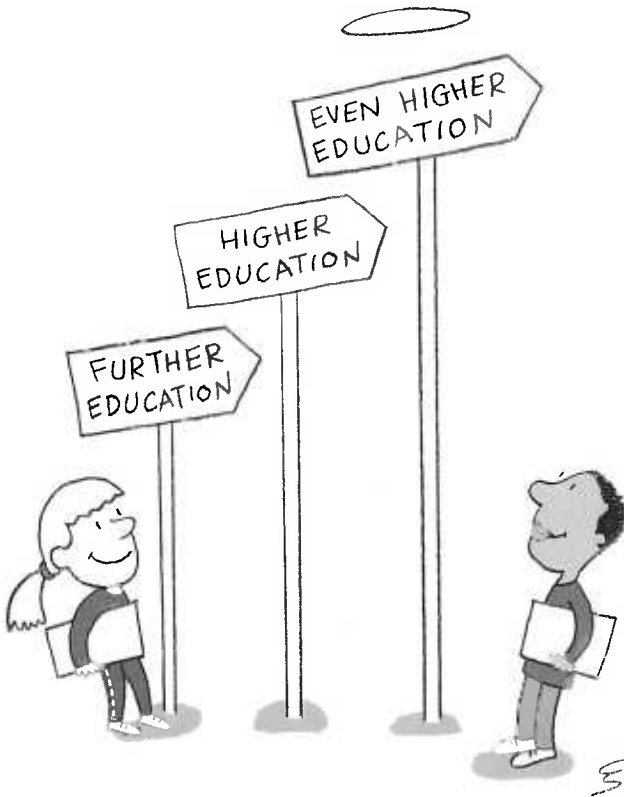
A church has a financial responsibility towards its school through the governing body and a responsibility to provide some of the governors. The minister/priest is often a member of the governing body, though not necessarily its chair. This allows him or her to fulfil a chaplaincy role which is also a responsibility of the church. The church has a moral responsibility for the spiritual development of the school which, although partly fulfilled by the chaplain and governors, has a wider implication for all church members who should pray for the school and offer help in whatever way is needed. Thus the ideas and suggestions for creating links between churches and community schools are in many cases equally applicable to churches and their church schools.

The present Government looks positively on the development of church schools and the Dearing Report for the Church of England also encouraged the establishment of new schools. If churches in an area feel led in this direction, they need to make contact with their diocese or church headquarters for preliminary advice as well as being aware of local developments and the views of other local churches in the hope that the work can be ecumenical. In Sheffield, for example, Emmanuel Junior Anglican-Methodist aided school was built to incorporate a community room and local church building. It is very much the junior school for the local community whilst links with the local ecumenical church community are very strong and creative.

On from school

This material has concentrated on links between churches and local schools, but young people move on from school into further and higher education. Churches are involved with Colleges of Further Education as was described in *Pilgrim Post*, (Churches Together in England) July 2002. Further details are available from Anthea Turner, Churches National Adviser in Further Education, Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3NZ, e-mail: anthea.turner@c-of-e.org.uk.

The main denominations are present in Colleges in Higher Education and Universities through the Chaplaincy services. Further details are available from Revd Ian Millgate, Secretary, Churches Higher Education Liaison Group, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8RT, e-mail: imillgate@baptist.org.uk.



Where will it end?

Every church can be involved in supporting a school by one of the ways described here even if there is no-one connected with schools or education in the church at present and even if there are no informal links with children or young people.

There is a school in the neighbourhood of every church, and we are all called to love and serve our neighbours.

All Christians have the privilege of prayer.

Put these two together and the link between church and school has started - where it will end is in the hand of God.



Reference Section

Organisations

The national offices of the **Denominations** and local **dioceses** should know what is happening in your area as well as offering advice and support.

Scripture Union, a non-denominational Christian organisation concerned for children, young people and schools; offers help, information and resources for creating and maintaining links with schools: 207-209 Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 2EB. www.scriptureunion.org.uk/schools -

Schools Ministry Network, made up of organisations with a “schools ministry”, administered by Scripture Union, provides the opportunity to share ideas and experiences. Concern for training of schools Christian workers.

CARE for Education, an education subgroup of CARE, can be joined by going on its mailing list. Non-denominational with an evangelical perspective, is pro-life and issues-based. Concern for Christian Governors and their training: www.careforeducation.org.uk - 53 Romney Street, London, SW1P 3RF.

The Spire Trust, a non-denominational Christian charity, encourages the creation of groups of Christian people who will undertake to build relationships of mutual trust and understanding with the staff of their local secondary school and offer themselves as a resource to the school in the teaching of Christianity www.spiretrust.org.uk -: 60 Green Lane, Purley, Surrey, SU8 3PJ.

CLC Books 4 Schools aims to get quality Christian based books into schools to help young people improve their reading ability and spiritual awareness. CLC, Shawton House, 792 Hagley Road West, Oldbury, West Midlands, B68 0PJ, e-mail: CLCUKRO@aol.com

Stapleford Centre has a partnership scheme for churches wanting to buy books for schools. Their focus is on teaching about Christianity as well as spiritual development in other areas of the curriculum. There also provide materials for collective worship - www.stapleford-centre.org - The Old Lace Mill, Frederick Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, NG9 8FN

Bible Explorer is an educational programme for Key Stage 2, years 5 and 6, teaching from the Old and New Testament. Offers training for local presenters: www.Bible.org.uk - Bible Explorer Department - WTB Ministries, Claire Road Business Park, Kirby Cross, Frinton on Sea, Essex, CO13 0LY.

Christians and Sheffield Schools A5 leaflets to help churches engage with local schools - CASS, 291 Abbeydale Rd, Sheffield, S7 1FJ, T 0114 4955343.

Websites

www.natsoc.org.uk - the Church of England / National Society site for all interested in Church of England schools and Church of England involvement in education, generally, as well as free weekly collective worship resources.

www.catholiceducation.org.uk - for all interested in Roman Catholic schools and Roman Catholic views on education.

www.schoolsprayernetwork.org.uk - to find out about setting up a prayer support group for a school.

www.assemblies.org.uk – assemblies for primary schools including help in preparation, presentation, music and drama, provided by SPCK.

www.blackburn.anglican.org/education – collective worship and religious education materials provided by the Blackburn Anglican Diocese.

www.culham.ac.uk - gives access to a range of sites with resources for Collective Worship; teaching Christianity: RETRI (Religious Education Teacher Recruitment Initiative) and Clergy and RE. Very good site for clergy and lay people interested in RE and collective worship, includes a questionnaire to see if you are suitable!

www.christianeducation.org.uk gives information on books and resources for Religious Education and Collective Worship.

www.theresite.org.uk provides access to all that is useful about Religious Education and Collective Worship on the web.

www.teachRE.com - promotes the teaching of Religious Education, designed to encourage people to consider teaching Religious Education as a career.

www.re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk – the Religious Education Exchange Service designed to support religious and moral education includes sections on world religions, ethical and moral issues, weekly resources for collective worship.

www.christian-teachers.org - the site of Association of Christian Teachers (ACT). Useful information, with guidance on celebrating the Christian festivals in schools.

www.cist.org is the site of Christians in schools in the Stockport area which has useful guidance for praying for schools.

www.spinnaker.org.uk - resources for assemblies in primary schools.

www.ngfl.gov.uk is the National Grid for learning, a network of selected websites that offer high quality content and information on education. It provides links to all school subjects including Religious Education.

www.dfes.gov.uk - for up to date education news from the Government includes a useful A-Z of educational topics, including learning mentors and RE.

www.qca.org.uk - the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority works with others to develop the school curriculum and its assessment. A good link into other organisations concerned with curriculum, assessment and qualifications. It has important sections on religious education, citizenship, spiritual and moral development and SACRES.

www.nc.uk.net - the Government's official site for the National Curriculum.

www.standards.dfee.gov.uk - has a range of in-depth information on such topics as Education Action Zones and primary religious education.

www.theredirectory.org.uk - a "first stop" reference point for all interested in Religious Education. The site is multifaith.

Books

Generation to Generation - building bridges between churches and schools - published by Scripture Union and Fanfare for a New Generation - price £6.99 from local bookshops (or SU plus p&p). This is full of user-friendly resources to enable churches to build good relationships with schools, and a good beginner's guide for building links with schools. ISBN 1 85999 351 6

Churches Serving Schools by David Lankshear published by the National Society. This is designed for churches generally not just the Church of England and for all schools, not just church schools. A thought-provoking book full of encouragement for churches considering how to serve their local school. New second edition 2002 price £8.95 National Society/Church House Publishing. ISBN 07151 49938

Religious Believers Visiting Schools - guidance and code of conduct - published by the Professional Council for Religious Education price £10 for 25 copies from Christian Education, 1020 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LB - www.pcfre.org.uk

Supporting Christians at work (without going insane) - a practical guide for busy pastors by Mark Greene published by "Administry" £5. ISSN 1362-3494

It's your move! Is a useful, colourful fun-packed 64 page book which pupils will find invaluable as they prepare to move from junior to secondary school. Published by Scripture Union, price £2.99 per copy or in bulk 10 for £10. The bulk ordering includes a user's guide giving ideas on how the book could be used. In addition, Scripture Union run a 2-hour training package for people who want to develop links between their church and local schools by supplying class sets of the book, or by getting involved in assemblies for those moving up to secondary schools. Single copies available for local bookshops, for bulk copies and training contact Scripture Union. ISBN 185999 501 2

Get Ready Go is a three book set, in an envelope, for parents and children at the start of full time education. In the set there is "Get ready to let go" - which helps families prepare; Get ready go - enables a child to talk about the big adventure of starting school; A Little Fish book which shows that God is with a child at all times...including their big day. Published by Scripture Union, individual packs £4.50, pack of 10 £25, from bookshops or Scripture Union.

The Book! - a directory of resources to aid spiritual/moral development across the curriculum, published by Mission Computers, Manor Farm, 14 Alms Hill, Bourn, CB3 7SH, email: thebook@miscom.co.uk. ISBN 1 902044 20 7

Knitting and Sewing

The Nativity Collection Number 285 - a knitting pattern for characters for a full nativity scene published by Sirdar.

Jean Greenhowe's Christmas Special Number 216 including a knitting pattern for characters for a nativity scene (smaller figures than Sirdar's)

Knit the Christmas Story by Jan Messent, published by Morehouse Publishing, Wilton, Connecticut (available from Amazon.co.uk)

Cloth patterns of the Christmas story are available.

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and published with the support of Leicester Free Church Women's Council, Westhill
Endowment Trust and the Jerusalem Trust.

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It's well over 40 years since children were sent to Sunday School and now many years since parents sent their children anywhere (they run a taxi service instead). So, churches have to reach out to serve children where they are - in schools of all kinds. May you be encouraged by this helpful booklet to reach out sensitively and prayerfully, and yourself be encouraged by the welcome you receive.

Canon John Hall
Chief Education Officer of the Church of England's Education Division

I commend this booklet to all who have or seek a Christian involvement in the mission of the church towards young people in their educational communities. There are many good ideas in here for the catholic sector too. It is a useful reminder of the many opportunities there are to forge close links in our communities. The booklet is user-friendly, supportive and stimulating.

Canon Peter Humfrey
National Adviser for Religious Education and Catechesis for the Catholic Education Service

Gillian Wood has been Education Officer for the Free Churches since 1995, having been involved in education all her working life as a chemistry teacher and then a teacher union official. This booklet has been compiled using her many contacts in churches, schools and the Religious Education world.

Churches Together in England
27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH
+44 (0) 20 7529 8141

education@cte.org.uk
www.churches-together.org.uk

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