

Good Practice in Church/School Partnerships

**Agreed protocol and guidance from the Board of Education,
Diocese of Bath & Wells**

Introduction

Inspired by the Dearing review of Church of England schools, 'The Way ahead' (2001) and 'Changing Lives, Changing Churches for Changing Communities', many schools and parishes have undertaken new ways of working together.

For most, the following protocol and guidance will be obviously and naturally observed. It therefore reflects expected procedure born of existing good practice to ensure productive and healthy partnerships between school and church.

For all, this is a journey of faith. We will hear rich voices of experience and the prophecy of the young. Together, we strive simply to support the children and young people of our schools and churches 'that they may have life, life in all its fullness' (John10:10).

Many schools and churches across the diocese now have well-developed partnerships which have been affirmed with a formal Covenant celebration. Further information about this may be obtained from the Diocesan Education Department.

On behalf of the Diocesan Board of Education, I am pleased to commend this approved protocol and guidance to you.

David Pert
Chairman,
Diocesan Board of Education

Throughout this paper, please interpret 'child(ren)' to mean pupils/students in full/part-time education; 'school(s)' implies both schools and colleges across the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

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Section A

Protocol and guidance for schools working with churches

1 Visiting a church

Visits to places of worship can enrich a child's understanding of faith within a sacred space and the activities of a worshipping community. There may be many reasons why such a visit would be helpful e.g. when looking at different curriculum areas – technology, history, RE, art etc, but on every occasion, children should be made aware that this is an important and cherished building for those who worship there – and many others besides.

1.1 Before the visit

- Obtain permission from the clergy for the visit, well ahead and confirm in writing
- Discuss with clergy or other church leaders the nature of the visit i.e. timings, age group of children, focus of the visit, expected outcomes
- Establish which areas of the church may be used by children both inside and out
- Check access for the disabled and toilet facilities
- Determine who will meet you and the pupils at the church
- Discuss possibilities of heating/lighting/music/available artefacts for the visit
- Ensure the children are well prepared – expectations, behaviour etc; be alert to the impact such a visit may have on pupils, particularly young children – possibly the largest internal space they will have known; some may have previous/existing associations
- Be aware that a planned visit may have to be postponed if, for example, a funeral needs to take place. Always check shortly beforehand that the visit can go ahead

1.2 During the visit

- On arrival, ask the children to enter the church quietly and with respect
- It is recommended that children be asked to sit still and silently for a few minutes on arrival so that they can simply 'get their bearings'; use the senses to help them get the feel of the place, its focus, sounds, light, smell.
- If possible, it is desirable to have appropriate members of the worshipping community in attendance to answer children's questions

1.3 After the visit

- Ensure that the church is left as you found it
- A letter of thanks, especially from the children, is always appreciated
- It would be interesting for the church to see the results of the visit –

perhaps some of the children's work could be offered for display, so that the whole congregation are made aware of the contacts the school continues to have with the church

2 Using the church for school worship, celebrations and concerts

Many schools like to use the church occasionally for collective worship or special events to celebrate Christian festivals; to mark the end of children's education at that school with a 'leavers' service' or other similar significant event. Often parents/carers are invited. These can be wonderful events, but as before, careful preparation and observation of protocols will help the occasion proceed smoothly.

2.1 Before the event

- Obtain the permission of the clergy, well ahead and confirm in writing
- Offer to meet any costs that may be incurred by the church in hosting the event
- Agree areas of the church to be used, which may also include grounds
- Prepare children well and make clear expectations of behaviour
- Discuss carefully, and request well in advance, the requirements for the event e.g. use of sound system, organ/piano, church furniture, projector/screen etc. Agree responsibilities and liabilities
- Be alert to health and safety requirements with the above and particularly with regard to the capacity of the church – the church has a clear responsibility and will indicate what is acceptable
- Agree leadership roles and participation of church and school e.g. the 'welcome' and 'blessing' from the clergy or other leader at the beginning and end of a service or concert; when it is acceptable to applaud; who will steer the proceedings
- Ensure that detailed arrangements are discussed e.g. availability of the church for rehearsals, responsibility for security, heating, light, equipment, refreshments, movement of any furniture, musical instruments, displays, storage etc
- Agree procedures for and beneficiaries of any finance raised/collection taken
- Check access for the disabled and toilet facilities
- Plan for emergencies!

2.2 During the event

- Keep to agreements and enjoy!

2.3 After the event

- The school should ensure that the church is left clean and in good order; check that all equipment is working and returned appropriately
- Letters of thanks to clergy, churchwardens and other key contributors,

- perhaps those who decorated the church, are appreciated
- Follow up with the key personnel involved from church and school – arrange to meet to discuss what went well and what could be improved next time

3 School participation in church worship

Schools should be asked to contribute to the regular worship of the church e.g. a Sunday family service, midweek evening celebration, special festival occasion, Education Sunday. Note that churches are very variable in their worship style, which may not be obvious during *school* use of the building. The regular congregation may not be used to having so many children present; it will be a learning experience for them as well as for many of the children and their families. The following should enable this contribution to be appropriate and helpful to all.

- Be clear about the type of service and expectations
- Try to attend a similar service beforehand to that you are aware of usual procedures
- When planning, try to negotiate some hymns and songs that both the congregation, the children, and their parents/carers will know – or at least that the words are to a well-known melody
- Prepare children carefully:
 - About the length of the service and what will happen
 - That this is *worship* and that applause may not be appropriate
 - About seating arrangements, especially with parents/carers present
 - About dress requirements whether school uniform, smart/casual clothing; remind boys about removal of hats/caps
 - About conduct in the church - quiet movement, respect before the altar
 - Encourage familiarity with books/service sheets to be used, which should be accessible to children
 - If the service includes the Eucharist, this will probably need to be explained to the children (and indicated to parents/carers in the initial letter of invitation from the school). It may then be appropriate for the children to sit with parents/carers at this point so that they can determine whether the children go forward for a blessing – or receive communion if appropriate. You will need to be clear if your parish permits children to receive communion before confirmation.

Section B

Protocol and guidance for churches working with schools

1 Protocol for visits to schools

When visiting or working in a school there are a few simple checks that can affect significantly how visitors are received or perceived.

- To visit a school, you need to be invited and it needs to be agreed by the head
- It is important to establish an appropriate dress code; this is best negotiated with the head. This code may change or be relaxed for different types of visits/contact in the school, at the head's discretion
- Agree on how you should refer to members of staff, especially in front of pupils and how to refer to pupils. This is especially important when involved in collective worship and addressing a larger gathering. Agree too how *you* will be addressed by the children
- Always report to the reception desk and follow the procedures for visiting the school. This may be different for each individual school. Always sign out
- If visitors are representing an outside organisation and they hold an ID badge, they may need to use it; the school may also require its own visitors badge to be worn at all times
- Depending on the nature of the visit or regularity of visits, visitors may be asked to complete an enhanced CRB check. If the visitor holds a current, clear CRB it will not automatically give access to a school site as CRB checks are non-portable. If in doubt contact the Diocesan Education Department office at the Old Deanery, Wells
- Wait to be invited into the staff room; it is not an automatic right as a visitor to have access to this space
- When involved in an activity or act of worship in a school, keep to agreed times.
- In the delivery of any activity, be aware of language, use of jargon and body language and aim it appropriately at the target age group.
- Be aware of what can and cannot be said and how to say it. Remember that the school and parish partnership is a journey of discovery and not a opportunity to "save the world" or be overtly proclamational
- If involved in a sports activity or sports day find out what is expected of the visitor
- If involved in classroom support or a lesson, know to whom the visitor is accountable, who is in over all charge and what is expected of the visitor
- Permission from the head teacher is essential before the distribution of any 'flyers' or posters are displayed on or near school premises
- If there are costs involved in your visit to the school, agree these costs first - schools run on very tight budgets
- If people from the church are regularly involved in working in the local school(s), this may have some training implications. If so, the church

should help to meet reasonable costs for this as part of their mission. There are also a number of courses organised by the diocesan education team that may be useful

- Locate the toilets for staff and visitors (as opposed to children)
- Know the target audience and building restrictions you are working with, then plan appropriately, sensitively and accordingly, with a variety of learning styles.
- Be sensitive to issues/incidents that may have occurred in the school / the community / the world
- Respect other faith and festivals whilst remaining true to Christian heritage, faith and practices
- Be aware of the content of pictures, videos and slide show as they may not be appropriate
- Establish a two-way process for evaluation and feedback
- Establish a plan of action for when something needs challenging or goes wrong

2 Protocol for the church using a school site for activities or worship

Establish a code of practice when using a school site for activities and worship.

- Agree rules and boundaries and times
- Agree who is responsible for security
- Agree whose policies and insurances the work is covered by
- Be clear on child protection policies and procedures (see section on Child Protection)
- Carry out your own health and safety checks
- Agree what spaces can be used and what they will be used for
- Agree any changes before changes are made
- Agree the use of toilets and baby changing facilities. Don't just assume they can be used
- Agree where prams and wheelchairs can be parked safely
- Sort out issues of disabled access
- Agree the use of equipment, including PA and hearing loops. Remember to switch it off after use
- Don't assume the use of car parking facilities or play space as this may not be insured for out of schools hours use
- Always leave the site clean and tidy and report any breakages / damages
- Know if other people are on the school site carrying out building works or maintenance when you are using the building as it may not be appropriate to be on the site together. There may also be insurance and security implications
- Agree any use and storage of resources

When setting up an after school club, breakfast club, holiday club, Christian Union etc *hosted by the parish*, much of the section above will also apply. Make sure it is known that the church is responsible for:

- The children / young people
- The programmes and activities
- The policies and procedures including Child Protection.
- The staffing and staff checks.
- Insurance adequate and appropriate to the programmes and activities.
- The school policy may cover public liability.
- Security.

Section C

1 Collective worship in schools

- Collective worship is the entitlement of *all* pupils
- It should take place daily for every pupil
- Schools may gather as the whole school, in key stages, in year groups, houses or in class/tutor groups
- Collective worship can be led
 - by Head, staff, pupils/students, clergy and other volunteers, invited guests (“suitable persons”)
 - by one, several or many people
- All visitors, including clergy, are present by invitation; they may not lead collective worship as of right (includes church schools)
- A whole school assembly can be very challenging for teachers and visitors alike, given the wide age range; e.g. 4 – 11 in a primary school. Clergy and other regular visitors can often have greatest impact by leading smaller groups e.g. class or key stage assemblies in rotation.
- Collective worship needs comfortable surroundings and a focus to look at (not just the leader)
- It needs a policy, a planned calendar of themes for each week, a budget for resources, in-service training for regular leaders (staff and others)
- Aims
 - to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God
 - to consider spiritual and moral issues
 - to explore their own beliefs
 - to encourage participation and response (active and/or passive)
 - to develop community spirit
 - to promote a common ethos and shared values
 - to reinforce positive attitudes

(Department for Education Circular 1/94)

- Worship is generally understood to imply the recognition of a supreme being. It should be clear that the words used and/or the activities observed in worship recognise the existence of a deity
- Collective Worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” in Community Schools
(Education Reform Act 1988)
- Church of England Schools, both Aided *and* Controlled, should be

guided by their Trust Deeds, i.e. Collective Worship is “Distinctively Christian” with some Anglican elements

- In schools, worship is collective and educational in intent, not as in churches where it will be corporate and confessional and where believers gather as a body

- Collective worship can include

singing, hymns and songs	mime
music (pop, classical)	dance
readings from Bible, other	prayer
sacred or secular literature	creative silence
humour	reflection
telling stories	stilling
a thought for the day	slides
drama	OHPs
visitors	videos/DVD
PowerPoint	artefacts

- Collective Worship:
 - can be the heart and soul of a school
 - shares the values and feelings, the joys, hopes and fears of all in the school, especially the children
 - gives a focus to the life of the Spirit and the Spiritual in life
 - offers the life of the school to God, asking for His blessing
 - enables the transcendent to become grounded in the school (the Word becomes flesh)

- When planned and executed well and with sincerity, collective worship can be a rich source of inspiration for the whole school and a focus for all that is good and worthy of celebration

2 Occasional, regular and special services in church

- These occasions provide an opportunity to welcome all members of the wider school community into the church.
- A church is likely to be the largest internal space that the primary school children will have experienced – remember the impact this can have. Contemplating the wonder of the building can enhance a child’s grasp of the spiritual.
- Small (class) groups of children can also benefit from worship led within a small area of a church e.g. a side chapel
- How is the symbolism of objects within the church used?
- Do the children know how the church is used at other times?
- [How might the parish and school celebrate Education Sunday, Mothering Sunday etc](#)

3 Checklist for leaders of Collective Worship

- It is essential to *co-ordinate* the topic/theme with the school
- Ask to observe an act of worship led by the head teacher or other to become familiar with the school’s regular practice

- Try to emphasise the *spiritual* aspect of a planned topic (many staff feel uncomfortable talking about God)
- Take account of the age, size and ability of the group **they will have a variety of different learning needs**
- Participation – what will the children / adults *do*? Check on ease of movement and the time this could take.
- Assumptions - a child that attends church regularly will want to be associated with things that the church is doing with the school. If there are pupils in the school that the leader knows from church, don't assume they will participate in an activity the leader is planning. They may be happy to help, but always ask them prior to the activity taking place.
- Never assume all will know about
 - The Bible and Christian stories
 - Christian customs, rituals, traditions and symbols
 - Liturgy and Prayers
 - Seasons and festivals
- We live in a very different world today, where many of these things have not been passed on to the next generation
- Audio / visual aids work well but be aware of the content of pictures, videos etc as they may not be appropriate; seek guidance from the school
- A focus for worship? E.g. candle, icon, flowers
- What music may be used? E.g. songs, sound system
- Stilling, reflection, prayer (what prayers are familiar to the children?)
- Feedback - from staff and pupils
- It helps to leave a copy or outline of the session / collective worship that has taken place so the school can build a portfolio of what visitors have been doing (this can be particularly helpful for the school's inspection/self-evaluation)

4 Other occasions

Establish a protocol for hosting joint events such as

- Harvest suppers
- Church / school bazaars
- Community events
- Family days
- Acts of family worship

Section D

1 Practical ways in which schools might serve their parishes:

- Offer prayers written by pupils in school to the church for use in its worship e.g. a book of prayers produced and sold for charity
- Occasionally contribute to church worship e.g. Education Sunday, beginning of the school year, patronal and other festivals
- Exhibit pupils' work in the church
- Offer regular contributions to the parish magazine
- Support fund raising activities for the parish
- Develop reciprocal arrangements with parishioners e.g. IT support / hearing pupils read
- Plan opportunities throughout the curriculum that promote the church
- Ensure that parishioners are invited to special school events
- Seek to incorporate hymns and prayers used by the church in school worship
- Invite church members to an 'open day'
- Share school facilities
- Clean the church before/after school use!
- Staff sharing with parish children's workers current methods used in schools and resources
- School governors share reports of school activity/developments with parish
- In partnership with parishioners, the development of a 'quiet garden'
- Work alongside the parish to develop links with the wider world
- The school could make its facilities more accessible for worship (family / all age services etc) or for functions and events
- If the school is close to the church and it has its own parking facilities it could offer this facility to the church (where applicable) for special services and weddings

2 Practical ways in which parishes might serve their schools:

- Pray for the school. Pray for individual classes, teachers and non-teaching staff, as well as the whole school. **Be sensitive in how and where public prayers are said for individuals or sensitive situations.**
- Collective worship: observe how collective worship is done in the school first. If you are not confident, start small and work up to bigger assemblies.
- Church visits: let the school and the pupils set the agenda. There are many curriculum opportunities with church visits; these include DT, history, community studies as well as RE. These need to be well planned, creative and stimulating.
- Lunchtime clubs.
- Assisting with pastoral support for Yr 6 moving to Yr7.
- After school clubs: these can be focused on art, drama, sports, games, music etc.

- Class room support: hearing children read, working with individuals etc.
- Games support **and sports days**
- **Help with school trips and leavers days**
- Holiday clubs.
- Choir or other music group.
- Invite children to All Age Worship: use similar music, books etc to school.
- Invite children to take part in special services through out the year.
- Joint events.
- Make up boxes of Christian artefacts that the school can borrow.
- Godly play
- **Help with specific projects such as Blue Peter appeals, environmental projects or quiet gardens**
- **Help the school with overseas links (Zambia etc)**
- Serve staff, not just the pupils: take in wine or cakes to staff room in February or October! (Not end of term or Christmas)
- Regular communication: include school items on parish newsletter, PCC agenda and church notices.
- Use the gifts in the parish to serve the school in what ever way will be beneficial to the school.
- Serve the school by learning from them, about the ethos, life and culture of the church.
- Start slowly to build a mutually beneficial relationship between the parish and school.
- Keep listening and learning.
- **In times of crisis offer practical support.**
- **Discuss with the school opportunities for children to participate in the Eucharist e.g. careful, well-briefed observation of mid-week Eucharist by a small group of children; opportunities for whole-school Eucharist.**

Section E

Child protection and policy

Good practice in child protection depends on clear boundaries and clear guidelines about responsibility. Where schools and parishes work together each needs to be aware of where their responsibilities lie.

For example if a parish approaches a school to use their premises the parish is responsible for child protection good practice even though the activity is taking place on school property. Similarly if a school approaches the church to use their facilities the school carries the child protection responsibilities.

Please consult the 2005 copy of the *Diocesan Child Protection Policy* and the *Associated Guidelines, Protecting all God's Children* for full details of the policy. There are also various helpful pamphlets available:

- *'Understanding Child Protection in the Parish, Questions and Answers'*
- *'Appointed Person – Role and Responsibilities'*

- *'Information for Parents and Carers'*
 - *'Good working practice' – cards for easy reference*
- Further guidance is available from the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.

Section F

1 School glossary of terms

Agreed Syllabus – a syllabus of religious education that is not specific to one religion, adopted by an LEA for teaching in community and church schools. The course is developed by the SACRE (see below).

Attainment targets – the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils of differing ability and maturity are expected to have by the end of each Key Stage of the National Curriculum.

Catchment Area – a defined geographical area from which a school takes its pupils.

Capital expenditure – spending on building projects and large items of equipment.

Circular – policy statement issued by a government department, which does not have the status of law, but which gives guidance on interpretation and implementation of the law.

Community schools – schools wholly funded by the LEA.

Children's Services Authority (CSA) – co-ordinated authority for children and young people (replaces LEA).

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) – central government department with responsibility for education.

Exclusion – banning a pupil from school by the head, either temporarily or permanently, on disciplinary grounds.

Form of Entry – number of classes that a school admits each year.

Foundation Governor – a person appointed to be a member of a school's governing body, other than by the LEA, to ensure that the school preserves its particular religious character or that it is conducted in accordance with the terms of a Trust Deed (or, if a school has neither religious character nor a trust deed, is appointed as a foundation governor).

Foundation School – a school introduced on 1/9/99 by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Totally funded by an LEA. The governing body employ the staff and control pupil admissions.

GNVQ – General National Vocational Qualification.

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools.

In-service Education and Training (INSET) – the professional training and development of teachers working in schools – generally taken as short courses or day conferences.

Instrument of Government – legal document providing for the composition of a governing body of school.

Key Stages – the four stages of pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge and skills as set out in the National Curriculum. Pupils are tested at the end of each stage. Key Stage 1 where the majority of pupils are aged 5 to 7, Key Stage 2 where the majority of pupils are aged 8 to 11, Key Stage 3 where the majority of children are aged 12 to 14, and Key Stage 4 where the majority of pupils are aged 15 to 16.

LEA – Local Education Authority.

LEA-maintained school – school for which an LEA has financial and administrative responsibility.

Local Management of Schools (LMS) – the term that describes a scheme for delegating financial responsibility from the LEA to schools.

National Curriculum – the programmes of study laid down by law for all pupils aged from 5 to 16 in state schools.

NQT – newly qualified teacher.

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) – the body which arranges and sets standards for school inspections.

Pupils on roll – pupils registered at a school.

SACRE – see Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) – learning difficulties for which a child needs special educational help.

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) – Committee advising an LEA on matters connected with religious education and collective worship in schools. Churches and teachers are represented.

Voluntary aided school – a school set up and owned by a voluntary body, usually a church body, largely financed by an LEA. The governing body employ the staff, and control pupil admissions and religious education.

Voluntary controlled school – a school set up by a voluntary body usually a church body (generally Church of England). Totally funded by an LEA. The LEA employs the staff.

2 Church glossary of terms

Traditions in the Church

Most churches follow a particular tradition / churchmanship that will affect the way they express themselves in worship and lifestyle.

Here are some of the main terms used that may need explaining to the school:

- Anglo Catholic: A church that belongs to the Church of England with an emphasis on high church practices such as bells, incenses and confession. Anglo Catholics relate closely to the Catholic Church where Communion is central to church life and worship. worship can be fairly formal and structured.
- Liberal: Means to have a willingness to accept new and radical thinking about faith, the church and issues relating to the world and society, often looking at new ways of thinking rather than following tradition. Worship can be more experimental.
- Evangelical: Often refers to a church that has a high emphasis on the bible and the teachings of Jesus. There is an importance stressed on salvation through a personal conversion to faith, “Born again” is a term often used. Worship can be more open and lively.
- Charismatic: Has a high emphasis on the presence and working of the Holy Spirit. Worship can be less structured to allow the Holy Spirit to intervene. Worship is often lively and the teaching bares a close relationship to Evangelicals.

- Denomination: One of the different branches of Christianity, e.g. the Church of England (Anglican), Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, United Reform Church, Salvation Army, Orthodox, Free-church, Community Church etc.
- Ecumenical: The effort of the different Christian denominations in promoting / working together in unity.

Structures and roles in the Church of England

- Vicar, rector, incumbent, minister etc: person who is ordained with spiritual and pastoral oversight of the area they minister in. (paid by a stipend)
- Ordained, Non-Stipendiary Minister (ONSM): as above but receives no pay beyond expenses
- Curate: ordained clergy who assist incumbents
- Readers: lay people who have trained and are licensed to minister but are not ordained
- Parish: church / local community served by a vicar or rector
- PCC: Parochial Church Council, an elected body of lay people with parish oversight of buildings, finances, staff and mission. Supports the roles of the incumbent and church wardens
- Benefice: a parish or group of parishes served by one incumbent
- LMG: a Local Ministry Group of shared ministry by clergy and lay people
- Deanery: a group of parishes supported by a Rural Dean and a deanery Synod
- Deanery Synod: administrative council with oversight of a deanery
- Archdeaconry: a group of deaneries managed by an Archdeacon
- Diocese: an administrative area, similar to a local county, run by a Bishop
- Diocesan synod: administrative council with oversight of the diocese