



# How to ...

## Develop links with local schools

**If asked the question, ‘Where do we find children?’ the quick answer might be ‘in school.’ Schools are created for children and without them, schools would be pointless. However, schools also have teachers, support/non-teaching staff, as well as governors, parents and visitors on special occasions. Every school, regardless of its size or location will have a number of connections with the wider community.**

Many schools – church, community and private - welcome visitors and links with the local church. Often this contact depends on the goodwill of the Headteacher and Governors, so the first step is always to make contact the Headteacher first. Remember that they are busy people, so be patient and understanding if it takes a while to get a response. Before any meeting, think through what the church can offer but be willing to listen to the needs of the school and to identify ways to connect and serve which will actually support the school. Opportunities extend far beyond those often led by the vicar or minister e.g. leading an act of collective worship or being on the Governing body, so below is a list of useful, practical, and creative ways that churches can support schools – the majority can be adapted for Primary and Secondary contexts...

### The Church can:

1. Pray regularly for the school's staff and children;
2. Start a prayer group for the school – this might be parents gathering to pray during school hours, or gathering (very early) over breakfast with teachers to pray;
3. Have a notice board in church about your local school(s);
4. Make the most of ‘Education Sunday’. Resources can be found [here](#);
5. Welcome school groups to the church building for RE and related topic visits. Resources like [Experience Easter](#) can help churches provide a invaluable learning experience
6. Offer to host plays or concerts in the church – this works especially well for Christmas choir performances or situations where the school doesn’t have a large enough performance space;
7. Invite the school to display artwork on a Christian theme in the church or to provide; music or input at specific celebration services;
8. Financially support a specific project, R.E curriculum trip or give bibles or ‘It’s Your Move’ booklets to all the year 6 pupils as they move up to secondary school – see [www.scriptureunion.org.uk/its-your-move](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/its-your-move);
9. Hold a special service like a Harvest, Christmas or leavers’ service;
10. Offer parenting courses – see [Care for the Family](#) and [National Parenting Initiative](#) for a whole range of courses that are suitable to be run in partnership with local schools;
11. Run lunchtime/afterschool clubs or children’s activities such as holiday and midweek clubs or a Messy Church at school;
12. Adopt a chaplaincy type model of “hanging around” - being there for children and young people in their space at breaks, lunchtime or after school.

### The people can:

1. Bake and take in cakes and offer prayer and support through times of Ofsted and SIAS inspections;
2. Hospitality can also be extended to serving refreshments during parents evening / Governors meetings;
3. Help with or set up breakfast clubs;

4. Organise prayer walks around the school grounds & local community.
5. Assist in the classroom or with reading groups;
6. Offer a skill such as sports, music coaching, cooking, gardening - even knitting;
7. Help with class outings, administration or volunteer at school events;
8. Lead or help with a school or class act of worship – see [www.assemblies.org.uk](http://www.assemblies.org.uk) and [Open the Book](#);
9. Help with RE lessons – see <http://www.understandingchristianity.org.uk>; [www.re-inspired.org.uk](http://www.re-inspired.org.uk);
10. Run a prayer space in school – this can be done as part of the RE curriculum – see [www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com);
11. Become a school governor – see [www.bristol.anglican.org/schoolgovernors](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/schoolgovernors);
12. Provide ongoing pastoral support to staff and pupils.

Of course these are just a few ideas to get you thinking. The diocesan website has useful advice, case studies/stories, resources and further ideas to encourage church links with their local schools. For more information and details on the 'Church/School link Award' visit the diocesan website - <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/further-ideas-advice/>

## Inspire Mentors

Thirteen trained 'Inspire mentors' are also available to support churches to explore the ways in which they might engage with, serve and support their local schools or colleges. These mentors are spread across the Diocese and each has a particular focus on primary schools, secondary schools or colleges.

The mentors are beacons of effectiveness and good practice who are committed to encouraging others to feel confident, resourced and enthused about serving and showing God's love in schools and colleges.

Mentors are available to offer free advice, wisdom and support to help churches, church leaders and volunteer schools workers to shape the offer that churches can make to schools and colleges. They are equipped to offer a tailored service exploring the opportunities that are unique to each church and school. Visit [www.bristol.anglican.org/inspirementors](http://www.bristol.anglican.org/inspirementors) to find out how to contact a mentor near you.

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