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DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

Core Services for Schools

Our Core Offer to Our Schools 2021/22

The Education department aims to offer a diverse range of services, activities, courses, advice and guidance to the equally diverse range of schools, MATs, colleges, universities, chaplaincies, and youth groups that exist within the diocese of Bath & Wells.

Our department is staffed by a committed and experienced team, for whom no question is too large or too small. We strive to work in partnership with those we serve, listening to their needs and responding appropriately.

We offer the following core services free of charge to schools:

- Annual contact with each church school by a Diocesan School Adviser. These will either be virtual meetings or face to face school visits and will include a SIAMS conversation’.
- A focussed SIAMS visit approximately at the mid-point between the school’s last and next inspection.
- A regular schools newsletter incorporating a newsletter for RE subject leaders.
- Support to governors and MATs on headteacher appointments.
- School Effectiveness support in relation to all aspects of church school distinctiveness.
- School Effectiveness support for schools requiring additional support in conjunction with local authority colleagues.
- School Organisation services and support on a range of issues including academy conversion, admissions, asset management & buildings, change of status, governance concerns and other legal issues.
- Support for Ex-officio and Foundation representatives (members, directors and governors) in their unique roles.
- Termly briefings for headteachers and chairs of governors.
- Local diocesan support via clergy, readers, parishioners, children and youth workers, chaplains, to support church school partnerships.
- Dissemination of resources such as advice on values, pupil voice, etc.
- Telephone, email or face to face advice and support on a range of issues.
- Advice for individual schools or groups of schools in looking at academy conversion or other reorganisation models.

School Effectiveness

Led by David Williams - Assistant Director & School Effectiveness Team Leader

The school effectiveness team is passionate about supporting schools in all aspects of Christian distinctiveness, through interpreting and sharing the Church of England vision for Education and its 4 key pillars; Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity. The outworking of this vision is seen in our core offer below:

Vision, Values, Ethos, Spirituality and Worship

We can provide advice and training on the Christian distinctiveness elements of being a church school. This can include visioning and values days, prayer corners, collective worship and promoting children's spiritual development.

Church School Partnership

Support and training materials are available for developing an effective and supportive church school partnership. We can provide links into deaneries which support churches, schools and families working together on a local level.

Governance

We offer support and training for governors, members and directors in how to carry out their statutory role, how to prepare for the church school inspections (SIAMS), how to support and challenge effectively, how to ensure that they are an effective governing body. Both bespoke and standard training packages and advice are available including specific advice and support for foundation governors.

School to School Support

We offer facilitation of school-to-school support through our good and outstanding schools in both school effectiveness and SIAMS matters.

Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Package

We offer a range pastoral care to headteachers, governors and staff. This includes training on stress awareness, signposting to coaching and mediation and also specific bespoke support such as bereavement support and support during transition and change. There is also an opportunity for church school headteachers to benefit from a residential retreat, hosted in the summer term.

School Effectiveness

Teaching and Learning

We run training in supporting schools to consider developing a curriculum in all its fullness. This means ensuring that values and character development are at the heart of the curriculum.

SIAMS – Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Support for schools in preparing for SIAMS inspections and implementing recommendations post-inspection. A range of materials and resources to develop good practice can be provided, particularly in relation to the SIAMS Framework.

Leadership Support and Development

Support and training for headteachers, RE subject leaders and middle leaders is available, as well as development of aspiring leaders. We organise annual headteacher conferences and help with recruitment. The team is linked into all aspects of the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership at national level and can advise on opportunities such as the CofEPQH, networking and research.

RE

Support for RE subject leaders is available through training, resources, advice and a regular newsletter. We can also provide advice on assessment and how to develop outstanding teaching and learning, in the form of our 'Understanding Christianity' training and 'Learn, Teach, Lead RE' hubs.

Standards and Outcomes - data and brokering of support

The diocesan education department recognises its responsibility to know its schools well in order to ensure that appropriate support is in place should they become vulnerable, and equally so that good practice links can be facilitated.

Part of knowing our schools is knowing the standards of attainment and achievement within them through a careful data analysis exercise carried out at least annually.

Headteacher Appointments

Diocesan Advisers will attend any essential meetings to look at succession leadership options. Once an appointment process is in place, we will support planning prior to the interview days (e.g. short listing) and offer advice on aspects of the appointment process particular to church schools, whether VA, VC or Academy. We will then support governors on the interview days and feed back to candidates if required. If there is a failure to appoint for whatever reason, the diocese will continue to provide support.

School Organisation

Led by Suzanne McDonald - Assistant Director & School Organisation Team Leader

In an increasingly changing education landscape, particularly with regard to school organisation, the team aims to help schools and their governors make the right decision for their setting. It is helpful if we are involved as early as possible. Please contact any of the team if your school is considering any school organisation change.

Academy Conversion

Diocesan consent is a prerequisite for academy conversion, and the DofE will require a letter of conditional consent to be submitted with an application.

The diocese has its own non-negotiables for church schools, depending upon which model is being proposed, to ensure the church school distinctiveness is maintained and able to flourish within any new partnership arrangement. The initial conditional consent at the start of the process is only finalised when the legal documentation is completed.

Bespoke training is offered for your governing body whilst you are considering academy conversion through to actual conversion. The diocese charges £1,500 for each school converting to academy status, to cover some of the internal costs incurred.

Governance

We offer support and training for governors, members and directors in how to carry out their statutory role, how to support and challenge effectively and how to ensure that they are an effective governing body. Both bespoke and standard training packages and advice are available including specific advice and support for foundation governors. We also support clerks in their role too.

New Schools

The Education Department is actively looking to increase or at least maintain church school place provision across the diocese and have had success in bidding with MATs for new church schools. We would welcome a conversation with any sponsor who would be interested in opening a new free church school. We are able to financially support bid writing and have access to significant experience both within the team and in the wider field.

Legal & Premises Issues

The School Organisation team are responsible for dealing with any legal and premises issues that relate to church school trusts or trustees. As we have a retainer with our legal provider, we are usually able to offer some initial free advice to our schools.

School Organisation

Admissions

We provide support and training to own admission authority schools, including academies on all aspects of admissions work. We offer guidance on core admission arrangements, including support throughout the determination process. It is vital for any VC schools considering a change of status to consider admissions as they will not have experience of being their own admissions authority.

Asset Management

We encourage all schools to ensure their Asset Management Plan is reviewed every two years and that they have an up-to-date condition survey done every 3 - 5 years. VC schools should discuss this with the LA; Academies & MATs are responsible for their own. VA schools can either work with The Hookway Partnership, or a provider of their own choice, to ensure their condition survey is up to date. VA schools are asked to ensure that they have an up-to-date template for their Asset Management Plan via the diocese.

Please note that all VA and academies are responsible for their own compliance checks. These will include Fire Alarms and safety checks, Security Alarms if installed, Radon testing, Legionella testing, Asbestos, Fixed Electrical testing including earthing and emergency lighting, PAT testing & IT system checks. It is essential that you either carry these out within the school or employ someone to do it.

VA Capital Funding

The diocese is given School Condition Allowance funding by the government annually for capital improvements in our VA schools. This is allocated strategically according to need.

Significant Change

The diocese is a statutory consultee on any significant change at your schools, so it is always best if we are involved as early as possible with any of your deliberations. This could include physical expansion, age range changes, amalgamations, federations, closure or a change in provision. We can attend meetings, respond to any consultation and support leaders throughout the process.

External Capital Investment

Where a significant capital investment is being made in a church school, we expect to be involved in the planning stages. Attendance of officers at meetings will be dependent on the complexity of the project.

Please note that in most cases, the diocese's permission is needed for significant changes and extensions.

'Go Team' Youth and Children's Ministry

Led by Tony Cook - Assistant Director & Team Leader Go Team

Our youth and children's team consists of three advisers, one based in each of our three Archdeaconries.

Our role is to work with youth and children's ministry locally, as well as focussing on diocesan wide youth and children's initiatives, events and conferences.

We see our role as to support, encourage, resource, love and equip all those who work with children and young people in parishes: this includes volunteer and paid workers, trainee students, school chaplains, teachers, clergy, readers and others.

We aim to:

Support: Offering advice, information, policy and guidance on a range of topics relating to ministry with children and young people.

Encourage: Drawing alongside what exists, assist in the development of new initiatives and facilitate mission, discipleship and evangelism among children, young people and families.

Resource: Making available an array of resources, activities and events to enrich the physical, emotional, educational and spiritual development of children and young people as we partner with others in building God's kingdom together.

Love: Offering pastoral support, gathering points, governance and voice for all those who work, or seek to work with children and young people.

Equip: Providing high quality training, conferences and professional development to meet the needs of those working with children and young people.

The Education Department

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‘That they may have life,
life in all its fullness’

John 10:10

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