everyfaithmatters

Contributing to Community Cohesion in Church Schools

including additional guidance for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS)

Department for Children, Youth and Education

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF WORCESTER
Foreword

On our streets, in our shops and on our buses, people of different cultures and faiths can pass one another by, so living in parallel worlds. Not enough of us have experiences with which to understand the lives and beliefs of other people.

This was a key finding of the Cantle Report (2001) into the disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley. Out of this report came the challenge to promote engagement with one another’s beliefs and cultures that is termed ‘community cohesion’. It is now a responsibility for all schools and part of their Ofsted inspection.

*Every Faith Matters* has grown out of the experiences of six schools in the Diocese of Worcester in which pupils of different faiths learn and live together. It is offered as guidance and encouragement to all church schools to be providers of learning which will engage pupils with their neighbours of other faiths.

At a time nationally when church schools are frequently criticised in some media for enforcing ‘parallel lives’ it is a delight to welcome *Every Faith Matters*. It joins other church publications such as *Presence and Engagement* (2005) in fleshing out day-to-day encounters so that pupils can grow in understanding and respect for one another’s beliefs.

I hope that *Every Faith Matters* will enable schools to contribute to the vision offered in *Our Shared Future* (2007): “Imagine the open communities of 2020—thriving and prosperous places where people from all different backgrounds are equal and where everyone matters . . . places where people are not fearful of meeting their neighbour—whether old or young, settled or new, black or white . . .”.


+John Inge
Bishop of Worcester
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Preamble

“In a mixed faith setting, the Church school can develop inclusive ways of expressing the Anglican tradition.” (The Way Ahead, 7.13)

The presence of church schools in our society is a privilege born out of the history of education in England and Wales. Church of England and Church in Wales schools were originally set up for the children of the parish and this remains a central aim of the Church today. For this reason, Church of England schools are ready to serve all in the community: those of the Christian faith; those of other faiths and those of no faith.

There are 102 Church of England schools in the Diocese of Worcester. While each school is distinct and celebrates its difference, there are aspects of shared responsibility that are not just part of the National Curriculum. Some schools have considerable numbers of pupils from different religions and races; others may have only a few; and some will be made up almost entirely of white indigenous pupils. In order to respond to this situation and to offer support and guidance to schools, church school inspectors and clergy, the Diocese created a working group whose report forms the major part of this document.

The encounter across faiths is already a daily reality in the classroom. Over a period of just over twelve months, diocesan officers have met with headteachers from six church schools in the Diocese, each with a significant multi-faith dimension, in order to share stories and to develop good practice. These six schools have been learning what it means to be a multi-faith community, often for many years. Other schools are on a similar journey but may have less experience in responding to the needs of children of other-than-Christian faith. The policy, guidance and good practice is for all schools in the Diocese, not simply for the schools which have been involved in the working party. All schools now have a duty to promote community cohesion:

“Every school – whatever its intake and wherever it is located – is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a country which is diverse in terms of cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds.” (DCSF, Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion, 2007, p.1)

The Guidance defines community cohesion as follows: “working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.” (p. 3)

Every Faith Matters is offered to governing bodies for adoption as a key component of the school’s drive to fulfil this requirement. The links and web-site are intended to resource schools further as they embed the Every Faith Matters agenda, reviewing existing practice and building upon it. It is hoped in addition that the document may assist parishes and clergy as they work in partnership with the school in promoting the spiritual development of learners.

In short, every faith matters. Every faith matters because every child matters and faith is frequently a crucial aspect in the identity of children and young people. Faith
matters to the child and the child matters to the school. Church schools with their distinctive religious character recognise the importance of faith for the child.

**Every Faith Matters Policy**

The Diocese of Worcester upholds the vision for church schools first articulated by Archbishop Robert Runcie, a vision that went on to shape the Dearing Report into church school education, *The Way Ahead* (Archbishops Council, 2001). The mission of church schools is accordingly that they should:

- nourish those of the Christian faith
- encourage those of other faiths
- and challenge those who have no faith (*The Way Ahead*, 1.13).

In realising this vision, the Department for Children, Youth and Education recognises that it is *the entitlement of the child or young person* in the church school that:

- his/her personal faith (and also the family’s religious beliefs and practices) be treated in all circumstances with respect (and this remains the case when no faith is expressed).
- he/she be enabled to grow in understanding those beliefs and practices as well as the beliefs and practices of others.

To this end, it is expected that at some point in his or her education the pupil will be given opportunity to visit:

- the parish church in which the school is set
- the cathedral church of the diocese
- and place(s) of worship from beyond the Christian faith community selected from religions being studied according to the locally-agreed syllabus.

**Notes on the Statutory Basis of the Policy**

Adoption of this policy contributes to the school’s delivery of citizenship education (particularly for Key Stages 1 and 2) as well as R.E.

Following the introduction of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, schools are required to promote community cohesion as defined in the *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion* (DCSF, 2007). Ensuring faith matters in the school through adoption of this policy contributes to appreciating and valuing the diversity of people’s backgrounds – a key element in promoting community cohesion.

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 is explicit in evaluating a church school as to how it caters for the needs of pupils of all faiths and none.

Although spirituality does not feature explicitly in the framework of Every Child Matters (Children Act 2004), the encouragement of faiths in the school develops positive relationships and builds self-confidence (see centre pages).

This policy complements and expands the statutory duty on all public bodies given in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.
The teaching of religious education according to an Agreed Syllabus will support the guidance offered here.

In the Dudley Agreed Syllabus the purpose of RE includes: to “help pupils, through such knowledge and understanding to develop positive attitudes of empathy and respect towards others whose religious beliefs and lifestyles may be different from their own.”

In the Worcestershire Syllabus the aims of RE include: “to encourage pupils to develop a positive attitude towards other people who hold religious beliefs different from their own” and “to develop pupils’ willingness to challenge religious, racial, and cultural stereotyping.”

In addition, the Non-Statutory National Framework states:

   Religious education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on:
   • pupils valuing themselves and others
   • the role of family and the community in religious belief and activity
   • the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences

This entitlement remains subject to the parental right to withdraw a child from R.E. as enshrined in the Education Act 1996 Part V, Chapter 3, section 389 and School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Part II, Chapter 6, section 71.

Comments, Good Practice, Suggestions, Incidents, Stories

On the following pages are examples, stories and suggestions drawn from headteachers and practitioners with experience in multi-faith contexts.

Church of England schools are subject to an additional inspection under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. This statutory inspection of Anglican schools (SIAS) includes a toolkit for self-evaluation. The four key questions form the shape for the good practice and guidance which follows. They are:

• How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
• What is the impact of collective worship on the learner?
• How effective is the religious education?
• How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The comments and suggestions that follow are grouped under these four key questions. They’re not intended to be the last word in good practice. They are meant to encourage and affirm schools in the journey they are making in ensuring every faith matters.

As well as ‘bubbles’ under each question, there are also ‘bullets’ featuring comments from SIAS inspectors, often drawn from their own experience in headship or from inspecting other schools.
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

Everyone has the ability to model for the children what they expect to be doing. It is promoted by everyone in the school. That’s important for all the children in the school whatever their religion.

It’s obvious but it still needs saying. Cultural diversity is an asset in the school not a problem. We have these different communities and we’re able to share them. We come from a richer soil.

Often there’s a public link with the church in schools – some with altars in school, some with regular visits to the church. Our school wasn’t like that but Christian ethos permeated all of it. It wasn’t just about R.E.

Parents with different faiths began to respect each others’ religions. We did a lot of stuff celebrating different cultures. When we did healthy foods we did foods from round the world. Or we’d do Mendhi patterns. This sort of approach became second nature in school.

We held Refugee Week in school. It was a chance to give pupils new experiences - the confusion of facing a whole lesson in a foreign language. They made temporary shelters and then they experienced them being destroyed. It helped the children to understand what it might be like to come from a foreign country and why they should be welcoming (and some of their classmates came from refugee communities in any case).
At our school there is an Eid celebration every year. At Christmas children have brought in party food. For Eid, it's different because all the food is brought in for the afternoon and prepared by parents. Last Christmas, the question was raised, “Are parents able to come in for the Christmas party? Parents get invited to the Eid party. What about the Christmas party?” I had to say “I'm sorry I didn't realise that.”

It's the little things that can prove important - they're often the things that aren't on the radar for you. We had a parental complaint. When it was the Christmas parties, the children had to bring their party clothes and change into them at school. Then a parent pointed out “when it's Eid they (sic - i.e. Muslim children) come in their clothes for the Eid party. How come?”

A parent in reception was concerned about a dragon on a sweat shirt in the child's first week. I talked it round and the child ended up wearing the sweat shirt. In dealing with divisive issues, there are often other ways in which cultural diversity can be recognised.

A liberal view of what worship is doesn't demean from its importance and significance but puts the child at the heart to explore it.

When a child died from a Muslim family, we were able to hold a memorial service in the school through consultation with the parents. Pupils were able to present their memories and share music, drawing on culture and faith. Prayers were given from both faith traditions, Muslim and Christian, to voice the grief of the whole school community.

The challenge for the inner urban area church school, is it a culture based challenge or a faith based challenge? At our school we're into third generation Pakistani families - they are British through and through. Families cross cultures. And when it comes to faith they are not even from the same mosque - so by its nature it's diverse in faith, it's diverse in the culture within faith.
What S.I.A.S. inspectors might hope to see . . .

- Cross indicating school is a place where God is present, worshipped, that faith is taken seriously.
- Admissions policy, school brochure & other key documents reflect the multi-faith context are accessible to all parents.
- Access to translator / community member who can liaise with parents to pass on information and extend school welcome.
- Open, friendly welcome for all. “We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.” (Mother Teresa)
- Link person from local faith community accompanies reception teacher on home visits, present at parents’ evenings, when school doctor is present.
- Christian values are demonstrated in relationships between staff and all learners; evidence through watching and listening at playtime, in lessons and as learners move around school.
- The school uses its Christian character to nourish, encourage and challenge the SMSC development of all learners – music, art, drama and story etc. from different beliefs and cultures.
- Evidence that every learner is equal in the eyes of God. Respected by all for who they are – fairly included in teams, in lessons – grouping, questioning, support – on school council, in after school clubs etc. Inclusion is at the heart of the work of the school.
- When talking to learners of all faiths do they feel happy, secure and confident in school? Are their gifts used, do they feel encouraged, valued and special for who they are?
- How are learners’ educational needs met? Supported in language groups where necessary to improve English and support difficulties / gifted fully challenged and extended.
- Vibrant, colourful, interactive displays evident which support learning for all.
- School building and grounds are well cared for – providing an attractive environment for all to teach and learn.
- Quiet area or memorial garden.Space for reflection containing multi-faith symbols and/or quotations from writings of faith and faith leaders.
- Display of local community showing local places of worship – church and parish links, mosque, etc. —maybe based on ECM—to show how all learners’ needs, including spiritual needs, are being met.
- Prayers written by each class displayed in the main assembly hall.
- Birthday cake – only opportunity for some children to celebrate birthday.
- Use of mother tongue.
- Explore with children what it’s like to come from a different country.
• Whole lesson in a foreign language.
• Siblings through school participate in important events (e.g. assemblies).
• Partnering of children across year groups (e.g. Year 2 and Year 6).
• Recognition of the importance of religion and a faith in everyday life.

Inclusive and respectful culture:
• Displays which emphasise the church status of the school.
• Displays which celebrate other faiths and cultures.
• Multi-faith representation on school pupil council, committees and groups – with the importance of Christian prayer to open meetings.

Inclusive celebration of the school foundation (school birthday)
• As a Christian celebration with opportunity for prayer from other faiths.
• Symbols around the school which reflect the Christian status – but use of other symbols in local / specific displays.

Celebrating religious festivals
• Opportunities to celebrate festivals of all faith groups.
• Use of SHAP calendar, with key dates for all faith groups.

Welcome to assemblies and other school events which emphasise Christian character – symbolism, motifs, illustration, whilst using text in other languages to enhance the inclusive nature of the occasion event.

Policy statements which reflect the school's foundation whilst respecting the needs of other faith groups – e.g. in
• Collective worship
• Sex Education.

Reflect to all that each child is valued –
• That his/her qualities and needs are known.
• That s/he has a voice in school life and in the classroom.
• That his/her achievements are recognised and celebrated.

Concern by whole school community for other groups in need, irrespective of faith –
• Charitable acts.
• Support for national and local charities, national and international disasters, local groups – elderly, disabled, impoverished.
What is the impact of collective worship on the learner?

Everyone had a part in the nativity play. It made no difference as to background as to who had what part. All were singing – children and parents – and some were Christian choruses. This is to do with community with all coming together. It was a telling moment. The parents had real trust in the headteacher.

Pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship were able to stay in assembly unless they were doing anything overtly religious. It can be easier for them if they are part of a group with a shared sense of security.

Collective worship at its best is simple and engaging. Some pictures on the screen with music and a poem can be really powerful. Simplicity moves children. We need to move away from words, and have the confidence to make time for reflection. Time gets filled with words rather than action. It's the only time we do something for children with no targets and it's crucial.

We've taken our children into church – Muslims as well – but we don't do it every week – if we did there might be a problem. If you keep it to once or twice a year at particular times like just before Christmas then that time is acceptable to Muslims because they're coming to celebrate or have a service with Christians, the same as when we have an Eid celebration at school the Christian children join in and the Christian parents come. We don't have that at the mosque – we have it at school but it's to do with joining in each other's important dates.

There's not one size fits all. In one school, Muslim pupils attend R.E. and collective worship but won't come to the church service at Easter. The 'deal' is that the imam comes to the school and pupils remember that this is an important time for Christians. It's a practice that works for that school.
Links between Every Child and Community Cohesion

Be Healthy:
- Have confidence in yourself
- Develop self-esteem
- Acquire a sense of place

Enjoy and Achieve:
- Be listened to
- Experience the world through a child’s eyes

Making a Positive Contribution:
- Identify the role of the child in religion
- Reflect on attitudes of gender, race, religion
- Recognise the importance of the young in passing on tradition and belief

Achieve Economic Well-Being:
- Stewardship of money wisely
- Use money wisely
- Care for the poor and disadvantaged

Religious Education:
- Spirituality
- Personal development
- Personal growth
- Community awareness
Every Child Matters, Every Faith Matters and Community Cohesion

**Stay Safe:**
- Respect other people
- Feel comfortable in your community
- Be aware of the link between

**Enjoy and Achieve:**
Be listened to
Experience the world through a child’s eyes
- Capture the immediacy of the moment

**Links between Every Child Matters, Every Faith Matters and Community Cohesion**

**Be Healthy:**
Confidence in self
Acquire a sense of place and community

**Stay Safe:**
- Respect other people
- Feel comfortable in your community
- Be aware of the link between

**Education:**
Spirituality
Personal development
Personal growth
Community awareness

This diagram is included with acknowledgement to Alan Brown, University of Worcester.
S.I.A.S. Inspectors look for:

- A recognition of religious diversity and religious family commitment.
- Invitations to pray / sing etc rather than expected requirement to sing and pray things they do not believe.
- Invitation for reflection on theme(s) of worship in context of own faith.
- Assumption that all are Christian in the same place, i.e. have the same views.

It’s easy to make presumptions about the way different faith communities respond to issues in collective worship. It was the Christians at my school who didn’t like the use of candles.

We use language which avoids presuming commonality in faith - e.g. ‘Christians believe’ rather than ‘we believe.’

In Shrek, Fiona tells Shrek to take off his helmet. ‘How do you think he felt?’ was the trailing unanswered question. ‘You can feel the silence’ teachers said afterwards. But it took a lot of setting up. They’d moved 600 kids into the hall just for five minutes - but it was a triumph.

We use open prayers to God rather than to Jesus so that all can share and join in. This is supported by the governors.

At issue is the impact or outcome. It’s not provision or content. If we believe this then we can promote short acts of collective worship.

The shortest act of collective worship (at secondary level) - “I’d like you to remember the Inuit. They look after the elderly, they look after the young and they care for the planet. Just remember that.” And they did!

A child came up to me after I had led collective worship. ‘Mister, I didn’t say that prayer - it’s not my religion.’ It’s a positive sign, not a threat, if the child has this confidence.

We use the story I tell in my way to those people. If we’re not engaged, no-one else will be either.

It’s easy to make presumptions about the way different faith communities respond to issues in collective worship. It was the Christians at my school who didn’t like the use of candles.
How effective is the Religious Education?

We've done a lot through R.E. and it's had a big place in the curriculum. Because of our local context and pupils, we've done more on Islam than in the locally agreed syllabus. We've tried to make it as practical as possible. So we visit a synagogue. We visit a Hindu temple, a mosque, we go to church. And we meet people who are part of those congregations so we can talk together about their faiths. We use a lot of artefacts so the children can play with them and touch them. When we did visual literacy we'd do journeys all done with cones and cardboard round the hall. So we did pilgrimage around the hall with children from all communities dressed up in bed sheets and whatever. The practice generated quite a lot of conversation along the lines of 'why are we going round here seven times then?' A Muslim was able to answer the questions for the children.

Throughout P.H.S.E. and R.E. was building values - understanding, tolerance, kindness, modelled with parents and children.

Local pilgrims returning from Mecca (Muslim) and the Holy Land (Christian) have visited the school to share their experiences.

If you take these values and these things about being fully human and spirituality we can have an impact into those using stories or poems from other faith communities so we actually tap into all the faith communities that are represented in our school. Picking something that's of human worth and value and allowing children to say, 'yes, I identify with that'. It should be a secure place to engage with one another's faith.
S.I.A.S. Inspectors see as important:

- Empathy with and understanding of diverse religious beliefs.
- A non-judgemental approach in the classroom. No assertion of the superiority of one’s personal faith.
- Accurate and detailed knowledge of faiths being taught.
- Listening to and using the knowledge of pupils who practise the faith being taught.
- The capacity to see links across faiths, common grounds, but also recognise the reality of differences.
- Syllabus reflects religious diversity.
- Religious teaching does not assume faith.
- Accurate information taught and understood. No mis-representation of any faith.
- Good teaching – open questions, useful, clearly expressed. Clear learning outcomes, well-resourced teacher in charge of material.

We organised a visit to the mosque for all our staff.

In one class, two Muslim boys actually demonstrated before the other children how they perform prayer. It was something they’d never done in school before and the other children had never seen. It was such a boost to their sense of self-worth.

We all share in the great festivals, including home visits and sharing presents.

The Christian child can find his faith affirmed in the multi-faith context. One child moved from such a school to one that was largely mono-cultural. ‘What do you mean’, he asked, ‘you don’t have a faith?’

We’ve used buddy opportunities during Lent and Ramadan so that children can learn from each other across faiths.

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How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

We built up trust with Muslim parents so that children would go to the Hindu temple. Communities need to understand what we're doing in schools.

As a school we found it difficult to make contact with the mosque. But we did so through the parents. We were concerned about children missing school with visits to Pakistan. We got a parent to work with the imam in the mosque. Asian governors were important. We tried to stretch out to all the communities in the school.

We adopted healthy eating, but it became a cultural diversity issue as well. Parents from the Pakistani community were asked what they might put in the lunchboxes. We've got three parents who are keen on forming a parental committee talking about culturally diverse food.

We have to be careful in making assumptions about what communities want. An Asian governor said (of concerns expressed by other parents) - "what do they expect if they come to a church school?" - "This is a Christian school - if children come here they're going to sing Christian hymns."

Consulting parents is crucial. We introduced an Eid week to get parents on board and involve them. We organised craft activities but the Asian parents didn't come - only the white parents. Instead Asian parents came and brought the party food on Friday. They didn't want to do art activities.

When incidents happen you have to be careful how you deal with them. Muslim parents were vocal in decrying what happened on 9/11. Immediately all the children were brought together and we spoke to them. In some respects that's brought communities together. Coming together at points of crisis is really important.
Suggestions from S.I.A.S. inspectors...

- Representation from school’s faith community on governors, parent committee, involved in lessons and after school clubs where there is knowledge or gifts to share.

- Practical anti-racist and inclusion policies.

- Governors and leadership actively promoting inclusive recruitment to governors and staff so that each reflects the community it serves.

- S.D.P. highlights as a priority reconsideration of the school’s Christian foundation. Part of action plan is to seek views of parents, pupils, staff, governors, parish and wider community. Working party includes governors, staff, pupils, community members, parents.

- All race equality documentation is in place, is regularly reviewed (including by governors), and racist incidents in the school are rare.

During Ramadan, staff have visited parental homes to share in food and home celebrations. This has increased parental visits and contacts with the school.

Finding common causes and charities to support, helps draw communities together. And children often have their own ideas of causes to support and will organise their own activities.

At such times communities need support given the perceptions that can be around. So Muslims felt under threat, on the playground for example. One of the things that encouraged me, was when the Pakistan earthquake took place, it was the white parents who asked if we as a school could do something.
• The head and other school leaders refer to other faiths with respect, and specify without prompting what measures they take to ensure the spiritual needs of non-Christian pupils are met.
• Positive benefits of having staff of other faiths are mentioned by the head and senior leaders, with examples of how they are involved in spiritual leadership, e.g. in planning worship.
• There is planning for regular involvement of community leaders from other faiths, e.g. the local imam.
• There is evidence in the school’s records of worship of multi-faith celebrations, e.g. Diwali, linked to evidence of a planning framework for this.
• Children from non-Christian traditions mention that the headteacher and other school leaders show respect, and make provision, for their faith.
• The older children from both Christian and non-Christian faiths are able to make comparisons with other faiths and understand similarities and differences with their own.
• Curriculum and resources support multi-faith understanding.
• Monitoring of teaching recognises contributions to pupils’ learning and personal development in a multi-faith context.
• Parents mention that the headteacher and other school leaders show respect, and make provision, for their children’s faith.
• No children are withdrawn from collective worship.
• The school has non-Christian teachers and non-Christian governors, who speak positively about the school’s faith base and their contribution to it.
• Basically if it is good, it is good for everything.
• Ensuring RE / Worship / Christian Character are central in school life.
• Setting an example of how a faith can be lived out in practice.

Ofsted Inspector’s Questions Regarding Community Cohesion

♦ What does the school know about its communities?

♦ How has it used that knowledge to promote community cohesion?

♦ How does it know whether its strategy is successful?

♦ How does the school develop learners’ understanding of other communities, European or globally?
SIAS Toolkit Questions

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The evidence the school provides to OFSTED on the duty to promote community cohesion will be relevant in addressing this question. It gives the opportunity to focus upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners – of all faiths and none.

Additional questions are as follows:
1. How well does the school seek to address issues of insensitivity and intolerance?
2. To what extent does the school seek to celebrate the contributions made by pupils of other faiths and cultures?
3. How well does the school enable learners of all faiths and of no faith to talk about their beliefs and practices?
4. To what extent does the school seek to encourage and affirm the beliefs of pupils from other faiths?

What is the impact of collective worship on the learner?

The toolkit already offers the opportunity for schools to demonstrate how they acknowledge the place of learners of all faith and none. Questions in the following areas give scope for this already:

- The importance of worship in the life of the school community.
- Learners’ attitudes to collective worship.
- The inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation of learners of all faiths and none.

Two additional Toolkit questions in this area are:
1. What does the school offer the wider community in terms of worship opportunities?
2. How does collective worship encourage understanding and appreciation of the diversity of faiths as well as the breadth of the Christian faith within the learning community?
How effective is the Religious Education?
Existing questions in relation to R.E. are considered adequate by inspectors in allowing schools to demonstrate how they are taking account of different faith communities.

In Voluntary Controlled schools R.E. follows the locally agreed syllabus by statute and is not additionally inspected under S.I.A.S. In Voluntary Aided schools, the policy of the Diocese is that the school should follow the locally agreed syllabus.

Existing questions in relation to R.E. are considered adequate by inspectors in allowing schools to demonstrate how they are taking account of different faith communities.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?
The toolkit invites schools to reflect on the partnerships between the school, the church and the local community, including parents and carers.

This gives scope to consider the way the school engages with other faith communities as these are expressed in the local community. Schools can ask:

a. How effective is the contribution of the clergy, church members and other faith leaders to school life? Are the parish and worship centres aware of the school’s aims?

b. How active is the relationship between the headteacher, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and other worshipping communities?

c. Do the school and the church, mosque, temple and synagogue give practical and prayerful support to each other particularly over significant events (e.g. appointments, inspection, celebrations, church services, Education Sunday, fund raising, Eid, Ramadan etc.)?

d. To what extent does the school communicate its successes and concerns to the parish and other worshipping communities (e.g. displays of pupils’ works, reports to PCC)?

e. How active is the support of parents/carers for religious events (e.g. collective worship, Eucharist, celebrations in church, other faith celebrations)?
Additional Grade Descriptors for a Good Church School in Relation to Multi-Faith Practice

Grade descriptors are used within the S.I.A.S. inspection framework to offer a benchmark for schools and inspectors. These sentences are additional grade descriptors for a good school. Reflecting the four key S.I.A.S. questions, they identify aspects of good practice in the church school addressing multi-faith issues. They don’t replace existing descriptors but are supplementary to them or are, in some cases, alternatives.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school creates opportunities across the curriculum for the celebration and recognition of faith communities.

Staff and governors articulate how the school promotes community cohesion and the impact of this on the learner.

Pupils of all faiths and none speak of how their values, beliefs and traditions are honoured and respected in the school.

What is the impact of collective worship on the learner?

Worship occupies a place of central importance in the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. Consideration is given to the local faith communities.

Learners are able to talk about key religious festivals including Christian ones, and the church’s year.

The school includes appropriate expression of other faith communities as part of its Christian witness.

Worship reflects the multi-ethnicity of the Christian faith.

How effective is the Religious Education?

The vast majority of learners, of all faiths and none, gain spiritual and moral development and insight from R.E.

Through its R.E. the school prepares pupils well for living in a multi-faith and multicultural world.

The school’s R.E. syllabus complies with Diocesan guidelines and learners have a good understanding of the Christian faith, the Anglican tradition and of other faiths.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

There are effective pastoral and spiritual links between the parish/deanery, the school and other faith communities.

The school actively seeks governors and staff who fully represent their local community.

The school’s leaders and governors regularly review S.M.S.C. within school improvement planning.
List of Contributors

Crucially, the project received input from schools in the Diocese over a period of just over 12 months from September 2006. Senior staff from schools were involved as follows:

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In addition, the following offered professional support:
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David Morphy, Diocesan Director of Education
Jonathan Rendall, Schools' Improvement Advisor
Andrew Wickens, Dudley Education Chaplain (Editor)

Links


Case Studies from schools promoting community cohesion can be seen at: [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community_cohesion_case_studies/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community_cohesion_case_studies/)

The contribution of ‘faith schools’ to community cohesion with various case studies is considered at: [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/faithschools/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/faithschools/)

Faith in the System, a D.C.S.F. document endorsed by a range of faith communities is available at: [http://www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/Faith%20in%20the%20System.pdf](http://www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/Faith%20in%20the%20System.pdf)

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion published its report *Our shared future* in June 2007. The report includes recommendations to D.f.E.S. concerning the duty to promote community cohesion. The report can be downloaded from the following page or can be sent hard copy free of charge: [http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx](http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx)

Q.C.A. produced the *Respect for all* audit tool in 2006 which can help schools assess their compliance with the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000: [http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/audittool.rtf](http://www.qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/audittool.rtf)

The Institute of Community Cohesion has details on courses and extensive links: [http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk](http://www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk)

The faith and cohesion project includes suggestions on developing inter-faith youth work as well as useful downloads and links: [http://faithandcohesion.org/index.php](http://faithandcohesion.org/index.php)

The particular place of R.E. in fostering community cohesion is considered in: [http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/content/1/c4/17/89/RESPECT%20FOR%20ALL.pdf](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/content/1/c4/17/89/RESPECT%20FOR%20ALL.pdf)

The Diocese of London has produced guidance in relation to its schools which is worth consulting: [http://schools.london.anglican.org/Policies/Multicultural%20Guidance%20March%202007.pdf](http://schools.london.anglican.org/Policies/Multicultural%20Guidance%20March%202007.pdf)

In 2001, The National Society produced *Valuing cultural diversity: A self-evaluation kit for schools*. This may continue to be of assistance to schools as they review their contribution to community cohesion. It is available at: [http://www.natsoc.org.uk/downloads/vcd.html](http://www.natsoc.org.uk/downloads/vcd.html)

‘Faith Guides’ have been trained in Birmingham to offer quality visits to places of worship. Details from ruthtetlow@btinternet.com


Worcestershire Religious Education Agreed Syllabus: [https://www.edulink.networcs.net/sites/teachlearn/RE/Resources/Agreed%20Syllabus%20for%20RE.pdf](https://www.edulink.networcs.net/sites/teachlearn/RE/Resources/Agreed%20Syllabus%20for%20RE.pdf)


Further information and links can be found at the project web-site [www.everyfaithmatters.org.uk](http://www.everyfaithmatters.org.uk)

£3.50 (inc. postage and packing)

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