



Diocese of Bristol  
Creating connections



# CHURCH AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The church and school partnership award celebrates the positive partnership between a school and parish that leads to deepening relationships and involvement between pupils, school staff and church community. The scheme provides an opportunity for members of both communities to review their partnership and identify ways to develop this with the support of the Diocesan Education Team. Every CE school in the Diocese of Bristol, with their parish church can apply for the award.



## **What is the purpose of the partnership award?**

This award celebrates positive partnership between a school and parish. It provides an opportunity for discussion and mutual support between key members of both communities, a 'stock take' of current practice and ideas to inspire you develop your partnership further.





## Who is it for?

This self evaluation is sent to both the Incumbent of the parish and the Headteacher of the school to think together with their teams about how to achieve the award.

While there will be much in common between schools, where a parish serves more than one school, each school needs to make a separate submission to celebrate their unique relationship to the church and the activities that work for their particular context.

Parishes with no school in their parish are strongly encouraged to work with a local school, CE or otherwise, to explore how this award may be appropriate for their context.

## Does the award replace the SIAMS inspection?

SIAMS is a five yearly statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools. It focuses on the effect the Christian ethos of the church school has on the children and young people who attend it. SIAMS looks at standards of learning and progress, statutory compliance with, for example, foundational documents; the quality of the teaching in RE and how well the whole curriculum impacts on the distinctiveness. The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) celebrates schools that do well in SIAMS as it is an important indicator of the 'health' of a church school. SIAMS cannot however, 'make' a church invest time and energy in its local CE school.

The partnership award can be a really valuable piece of evidence towards SIAMS, but it does not look at the quality of teaching or leadership. Rather, it concentrates on encouraging the work of the church community in providing opportunities to build deep relationships and demonstrate Christian love and care to those working and learning in the school. In supporting the pupils and staff to flourish day by day, it's a 'living out' of the message of Jesus who came that everyone is able to experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). Parishes with no school in their parish are strongly encouraged to work with a local school, CE or otherwise, and how this award may be appropriate for their context.

# WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR THE AWARD?

- 1 The incumbent and headteacher agree together that the school and church will apply for the award.** They ask the PCC and School Governing Body to support the application.
- 2 The church or school will assign a main link person to co-ordinate the process.** This could be a Foundation Governor or church school worker/volunteer, or other appropriate nominated person. This coordinator will collate the information relevant to the application and maybe organise meeting(s) to engage others in the process as required e.g. headteacher, incumbent, children, staff members, collective worship leader, parent, PCC member/churchwarden, reader.
- 3 The application for is completed** by answering the questions in the sections numbered 1-5 and then sent back to the Diocesan Education Team. The form is designed to facilitate meaningful discussions between all parties as it is being completed. Bullet points are acceptable as long as they provide enough detail.

While it is important to have evidence of many of your activities and interactions, this should not involve additional work collecting it all into a portfolio (unless you wish to do so for your own school or church).

Use the ideas at the back of the application form to kick start your conversations or to audit your current activity. You will probably be able to identify activities that you do which are not listed in the examples. You might find it helpful to 'RAG' rate (Red, Amber, Green) how you are doing in each section and may decide to start some new expressions of partnership before submitting your application as a result of this.
- 4 Following the submission of the application form a diocesan adviser will arrange a visit to meet with the headteacher, church representatives and children to** discuss the application and experience the partnership in action.

In addition to discussion of the application form, additional evidence may be observed from things such as; a learning walk, parish magazine articles, display boards, discussion with children or attendance at a service or event. There is lots of flexibility to organise the adviser's visit as you feel most appropriate.

If the adviser feels from the application form and visit that there is good evidence of a strong partnership between the church and school, then **the adviser will recommend to the Board of Education** that the church and school have fulfilled the criteria and should receive the award.
- 5 The school and church will both receive a Partnership certificate** and arrangements are made for presentations. The award lasts for 3 years.