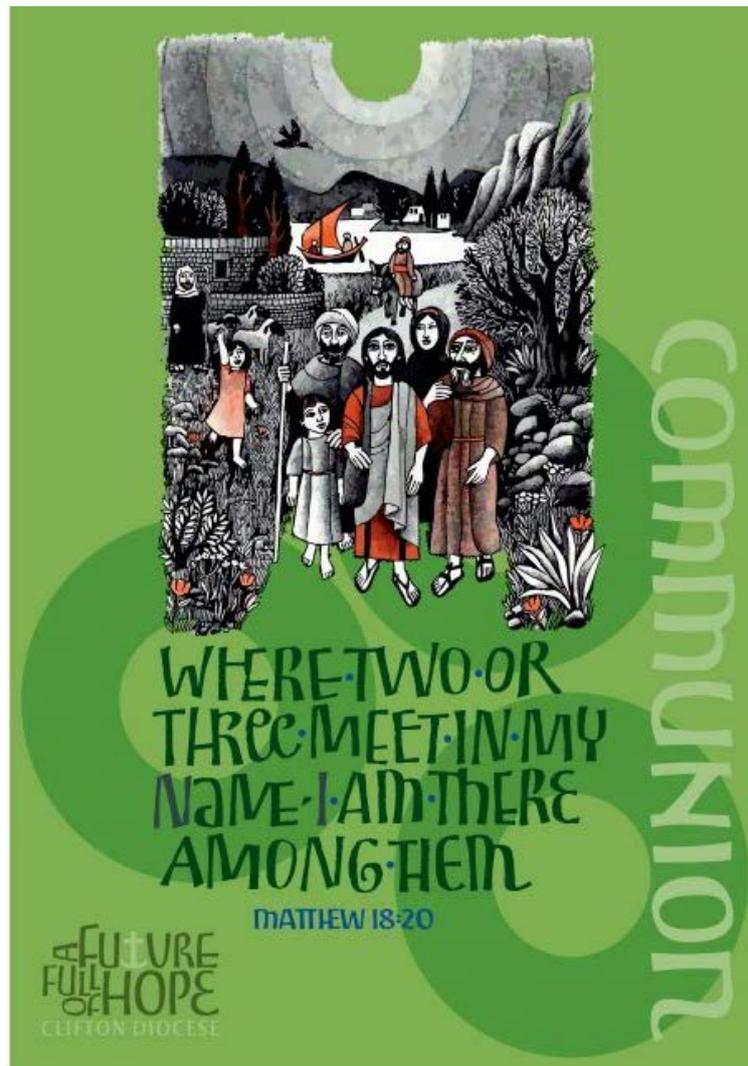


A Guide for School Governors



A LIFE LIVED IN COMMUNION

Our Parishes and Communities

***should be places where Christ is celebrated,
shared, proclaimed and lived,***

where everyone is welcomed and valued,

***and all have a sense of responsibility for the life
of the community and the world.***

All schools should have a copy of the main documentation provided by The Adult Education Department. Please ensure that as a school community you reflect carefully on that documentation.

As schools we would like you to consider the following aspects:

Our Parishes and Communities

should be places where Christ is celebrated, shared, proclaimed and lived

- This re-echoes firstly a continuing focus on prayer that has been embedded throughout the whole of 'The people of Hope Documentation' As a school community we need to constantly consider
 1. How we evaluate the Prayer Life of the School
 2. How we ensure that Prayer is inclusive
 3. How we help pupils to take ownership of the prayer life of the school
 4. How we develop our links with the parish community and encourage parents to take part in the prayer life of the school.
 5. Attached to the end of this document is a list of possible ways of forging parish school links. Please take the time to read it through and review your school activities
- Secondly if we are to share Christ with others, we need a developing understanding of Scripture. This fits in perfectly with '**The Year of the Word**' which is a Bishops' Conference initiative. There will be a separate section of the website with resources for the 'Year of the Word'. This will be constantly added to throughout the year and events will be organised to support this.
- Thirdly if we are to proclaim Christ by the way we live then our actions as a school community need to be in keeping with the Gospel. This might be an opportunity to ensure that your mission statement is actually lived out.

where everyone is welcomed and valued

- How do we know that pupils and staff feel valued? What mechanisms are in place for evaluating this?
- Most schools have ‘celebration’ assemblies where the work of pupils is praised. Is this effective? Are there other steps we can take? One school for example has a ‘Prepare to be Proud’ day where **all pupils** share some aspect of their work that they are proud of with parents or governors. If you are a secondary school in a culture where the pressure is to succeed at exams how do you ensure all students are valued?
- How are you developing a culture of vocation?

*and all have a sense of responsibility for the life of the community
and the world.*

- What steps are in place to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility for helping others?
- This Year the Bishop has asked all schools to take part in at least one event to support his chosen charity; The Apostleship of the Sea. Recognising and responding to the needs of seafarers is part of the Apostleship of the Sea's pastoral care work. These days the charity has to deal with cases of severe abuse and mistreatment of seafarers and fishermen, modern slavery and trafficking and cases where crew have simply been abandoned thousands of miles from home with no means of support. Many who go to sea do so because going to sea is often the only way to earn enough money to support their families, who are often in poorer parts of the world, such as the Philippines, India, or Ukraine. Once there though they endure isolation and loneliness. Exploring the real situations people face through RE would help develop pupils’ awareness of the various unjust situations people face and the response of the church. If you go to their website, you will find a lot of resources to help explain the work of the Charity. In particular look under the section headed Sea Sunday <https://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk>
- How is Catholic Social Teaching made known, developed and lived out within the school? We have a separate document on this please ensure you use this at governor/ partnership meetings to help you reflect on your school community.

We would welcome an opportunity to share your stories of how you are living out this year. Thank you for all you do.

Parish /School/Family Links

The Basics

- **Communication:** How do you keep each other informed?
Newsletters/Bulletins/ Notice Boards/Parish Council (Pupil chaplaincy Rep?) Are Pupil chaplaincy leaders introduced to parish?
- Exhibit pupils work within the parish
- Liaise over dates so everyone is aware of what is taking place
- **Welcome:** In church for families/for those who might be there for the first time after absence- so for example if school has mass in church are parents/families encouraged to stay for coffee? Multi-Cultural? Is Liturgy child friendly? (Including for disabled children or those with learning difficulties). (Prayer bags might for example provide a tactile or sensory input which some children may need?) In school are families/parish welcome at all liturgies/encouraged to be involved. Do we liaise over music? That is does parish and school share a repertoire of music?
- Parents (especially in Primary) will often come to a school event when they won't go to Church; this can therefore be a point of contact. For example, on Parents Evenings does the Parish have a table/board there where they advertise parish events and groups and have someone present to be a friendly face? Does the school hold events in Church? Do we make parents aware of the support offered by the parish?
- **The Wednesday Word:** www.wednesdayword.org helps children/Parents/Schools understand the Sunday Readings and connects them to life. Does the school refer to readings used in Sunday liturgy? Does it help bring out the meaning of these texts?
- **Resources:** Do the Parish and the School know what each other has/how they are used? For example: in Church do we refer to what pupils are studying in RE, do we help families make connections between their life at home, what the child learns in RE and God's presence in them and with them. Can we share our resources or expertise?

Going slightly further

- **Joint Action:** Look at the Chaplaincy development plan together. Can some of this be joint actions i.e. work for charity could pupils speak to the parish about their work. (Through parish council but perhaps at mass). Are joint Retreat Days a possibility? Could pupils present to parish their

work and explain their learning in RE? Could pupils and parish learn together? For example, if you invite a speaker from another faith tradition into school could the parish be invited to attend? Could the parish be involved in a school project which might appeal to the idealism/ of young people and their wish to help others or the environment? This might help them see the parish in a very positive light.

- Involving pupils in Leadership roles. Planning of (non- Eucharistic) liturgies. The Parish would need to be accepting of young people and their creativity
- Joint Support for families: Families face issues such as drugs/relationships/bereavement/self-harm/loss etc. If the parish provides help in these areas to support parents, (and many do) the school should make this information available to parents. Could school and parish together arrange 'drop in evenings' delivered by various groups which would tackle some of these issues? Liturgies could be arranged around specific themes.
- Community: for many pupils, families can be places of conflict or loss. Retreat centres for young people work well because they create a sense of belonging but when returning to the parish, they often don't feel they belong. If members of the parish were part of the retreat experience or able to listen to the experience of young people, it might help them create a better sense of belonging.