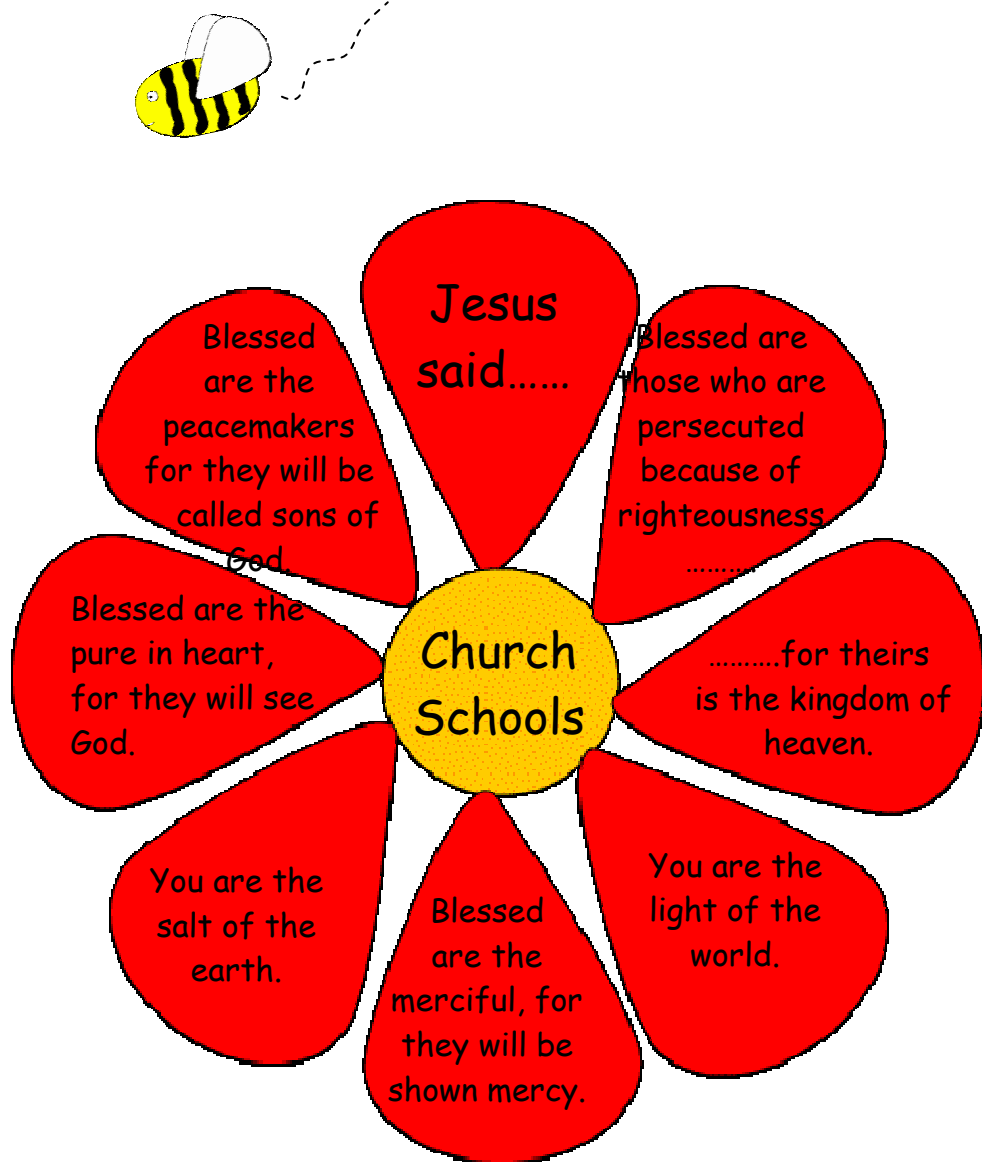
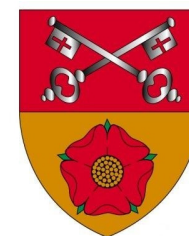


Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Guidelines for Community Cohesion



Be-Attitude



**Diocese of
Blackburn**

 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**

BLACKBURN DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS AND STAFF ON COMMUNITY COHESION IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called Sons of God" Matthew 5 v9 NIV

"You're blessed when you can show people how to co-operate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family." Matthew 5 v9 The Message

Introduction

Ever since the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' followers have been aware of the need to promote Community Cohesion. In preparation for the challenges his disciples would face Jesus taught the Beatitudes to guide and sustain them. This teaching is just as relevant in the 21st Century as we address the Community Cohesion agenda.

DCSF guidance defines Community Cohesion as "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".

This vision of society and sense of belonging by all communities has always been at the core of Christian teaching and life in a church school.

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy

Beatitude 7

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 faith, culture, ethnicity and social backgrounds.

Church schools are called to respond to this through the words of the Gospel

'Community' in relation to a church school has a number of dimensions:

- a) The school community and church community, the children and young people it serves, their parents and families, staff and governing body and community users of the school's facilities and services.
- b) The community within which the school is located, the Parish, the geographic community and the people who live and work in that area.
- c) The Diocesan community strengthening relationships within the church school family
- d) The UK community - all schools are by definition part of this community.
- e) The global community linking with the worldwide Christian communion and God's people everywhere

In addition schools create networks by joining with other similar types of school, or through working in clusters or partnerships, locally, nationally or internationally. Schools should be a thriving cohesive community supported by a curriculum that emphasises the role that spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development has in preparing pupils for life and therefore in contributing towards building a cohesive society.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God *Beatitude 9*

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus Galatians 3:28

All schools, whatever the mix of pupils they serve, are responsible for equipping the pupils to live and thrive alongside people of different backgrounds. Ways of doing this will differ, for example.

Schools with a diverse population will be contributing to community cohesion through activities enabling pupils from different backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other.

Schools whose pupil population is predominantly of one faith, or of one socio-economic or ethnic group will need to look beyond their immediate settings to provide opportunities for interaction between pupils from different backgrounds.

While many schools will already be meeting the duty to promote community cohesion, scope can always be found extend this work.

How does our school contribute to Community Cohesion?

- The school shows that ALL stakeholders value and affirm one another.
- Governors and leadership actively promote inclusive recruitment to governors and staff so that each reflects the community it serves
- 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.
- Celebrating diversity within the school

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Beatitude 10

Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum

All schools must help pupils to understand others and value diversity whilst promoting shared values, promoting awareness of rights and responsibilities within society, and developing skills of participation and responsible action.

Church schools should consider, for example:

- recognising the contribution of Religious Education in promoting interfaith understanding and dialogue that bridges the gap between ignorance, inexperience and enlightenment
- including in acts of worship Christian teaching about community cohesion and the implications of this teaching ensuring pupils are given opportunities which enrich spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and which will promote the understanding of community cohesion
- incorporating in citizenship and PSHE lessons opportunities to help pupils appreciate and value differences and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping
- facilitate effective involvement of pupils in decisions about the running of the school in a way that teaches them to participate and make a difference in their community
- arrange meetings and/or visits between members of different communities

How does our school contribute towards teaching, learning and the curriculum?

Visits are made beyond the local community.

The school actively invites visitors from beyond the local community.

Twinning schools involving learning from one another

International visitors (including partner dioceses)

Visitors to Collective Worship are welcomed and affirmed and diversity is celebrated in school

These visitors from the local community are welcomed and affirmed and are involved in the wider curriculum

There is planning for regular involvement of community leaders from other faiths.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full John 10:10

Equity and Excellence

For all members of the church school family to succeed we should be removing barriers to success, providing equal access in the participation of learning and working to eliminate variations in levels of achievement of different groupings.

Church schools could consider, for example:

- celebrating that the Christian ethos is conducive to supporting personal qualities, gifts and talents for the recognition of the unique success of individuals
- monitoring regularly whether pupils from particular groups are more likely to be bullied, harassed, disciplined or excluded than others.
- recognising that every child is unique; loved, valued and forgiven.
- ensuring that admissions criteria emphasise the importance of admission arrangements that promote community cohesion and social equity
- using pupils tracking systems to evaluate the progress of different groups and respond appropriately to a highlighted need

How does our school contribute to Equity and Excellence?

School development planning highlights as a priority reconsideration of the school's Christian foundation. Part of the action plan is to seek views of parents, pupils, staff, governors, parish and wider community. Working party includes governors, staff, pupils, community members, and parents.

The needs of all groupings of children and families are considered fairly and with equal challenge for success

Monitoring of teaching recognizes contributions to pupils' learning and personal development in an equitable context.

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

Pupils celebrate diversity.

Children from non-Christian traditions mention that the Head Teacher and other school leaders show respect, and make provision for their faith.

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 14

Engagement and Extended Services

The focus must be to provide opportunities for pupils and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations, developing links with other schools, agencies and communities through the provision of extended services.

Church schools could consider, for example:

- maintaining and further developing strong links and multi-agency working between the school and other local agencies such as the church, chaplains, youth support services, the police and social care/ health professionals
- engagement with parents and carers through church, Diocese, social events, curriculum evenings, parent/carer and child courses and family liaison work
- partnerships with other schools, international links, charity groups, video-conferencing, joint projects grounded in the curriculum

How does our school contribute towards Engagement and Extended Services?

Pupils have an appreciation of their local community/church community and the needs of neighbours

Pupils have an appreciation of the global impact of other faiths, global aspects of Christianity and global interfaith dialogue.

The School is engaged with Charity organizations

The School has active international links with Twinning schools involving learning from one another