



Diocese of
Blackburn



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



North Lancashire Methodist District

*Award Scheme
for
Church School
Distinctiveness*



Picture – Peace Be Still by He Qi

Award Scheme for Church School Distinctiveness

The Award Scheme recognises, accredits and supports the sharing of:

- **GOOD PRACTICE –**

Practice within 'Church School Distinctiveness' that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it. This good practice may be in any one of the five areas:

1. what makes our church school distinctive
2. ethos and environment
3. worship
4. religious education
5. personal development

- **BEST PRACTICE –**

Embedded practice within 'Church School Distinctiveness' that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it. This best practice may be in any one of the five areas:

1. what makes our church school distinctive
2. ethos and environment
3. worship
4. religious education
5. personal development

The Award Scheme will also encourage and celebrate:

- **INNOVATIVE PRACTICE –**

Practice that is new or imaginative and has value and is within 'Church School Distinctiveness'. It is also practice that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it. This innovative practice may be in any one of the five areas:

1. what makes our church school distinctive
2. ethos and environment
3. worship
4. religious education
5. personal development

All schools committed to the Award Scheme for Church School Distinctiveness receive a Certificate of Commitment and the Award Scheme pack.

The next stage in this process is to apply for recognition. Schools **must** register their commitment before they apply.

How does the school apply for an award?

All Diocesan schools are eligible to apply, though they must be members of the Family of Church Schools. Application and assessment are free and all successful schools receive a certificate.

Applications will be received once a year, by the end of September. Awards will be accredited in November.

Successful schools will be invited to attend the Award Ceremony, which will be part of Education Sunday service in Blackburn Cathedral.

- **Step one - decide the area to be accredited and the level of award to be achieved (good/best or innovative practice)**

Committed schools may identify areas of Church School Distinctiveness which, through their own process of self-evaluation, they a) have identified as being a particular strength or b) consider new and innovative.

Accreditation will be given for a specific aspect of the school's practice, as outlined in the 'Self evaluation Check List for Church Schools' (see School Self Evaluation Document Sept. 2005) which matches the five areas of the CD Rom 'Church School Distinctiveness' (obtainable from the Diocesan Office).

Applications should be as precise as possible as this will assist the accreditation panel in making their judgement. Should the panel feel that the area to be accredited is too broad, they may return the application to the school with a request to clarify the objectives.

A school may apply for accreditation in any of the five areas it judges to be worthy. There is no limit on the number of certificates a school may receive over time, but schools will be limited to one application each year.

- **Step two - complete the application form**

The initial registration application form is obtainable from Jean Hornsby 01254 503070 (Extension 219).

The full application form and guidance is accessible on the Diocesan website, following links to Education, and Award Scheme for Church School Distinctiveness:

www.blackburn.anglican.org

The most successful applications read as a chronological account from start to present, detailing the milestones and the actions that were taken, as well as clear indications of impact.

Successful applications from schools that are accredited with an award will be shown on the website. These might offer a guide for other schools who wish to apply, about the level of detail required for an application. They will also provide the basis for case studies that will, with your permission, appear on the Blackburn Diocesan website.

Support for preparation and initial recommendations may be undertaken by a Diocesan school adviser. The secretary in the Education Office at Church House, Blackburn will inform you who this is.

Please use the column marked 'source of evidence' to indicate the evidence to support your application – for example, data analysis, records of interviews with pupils, staff, parents, governors, or members of the church and wider community, etc. **You will not be required to provide all this evidence when you first apply.** The principle of professional trust will be applied to your application. You may be asked to provide some or all of this evidence when members of the accreditation panel visit your school. Having this evidence available will help the panel members to make their decision. If the evidence cannot be provided, or is inadequate, then the application will not be considered further.

- ***Step three - return your application by hard copy and electronic copy***

The closing dates for applications each year will be the end of September.

A hard copy of your application, signed by the school's head teacher and the chair of governors, must be received at the following address by the end of September in order for your application to be accepted:

The Director of Education,
Education Office,
Church House,
Cathedral Close,
Blackburn.
BB1 5AA

An electronic copy, either on disk or sent via email, would be appreciated.

daphne.durham@blackburn.anglican.org.uk

The Accreditation Procedure

Applications are assessed by a panel that has an appropriate combination and representation from the following:

- A member of the Board of Education
- The Deputy Director of Education
- A member of the School's Committee
- The Senior School Adviser
- The School Adviser for secondary schools
- A diocesan adviser
- A head teacher
- A parish priest or minister
- A governor

The process is three-stage:

- 1) Applications will be examined by the panel, whose remit is to inspect all applications and, where it is considered necessary, make recommendations as to the evidence that will be required in order to judge the application.
- 2) Applications and evidence will be reviewed and judged by the panel.
- 3) The decision of the panel will be ratified by Director of Education.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback to indicate why their application was unsuccessful and how it might be strengthened for future consideration.

Successful schools

Successful schools will receive a certificate and a copy of the Church School Distinctiveness Award Logo.

The school's name will be entered into the directory of good practice under the appropriate aspect and the case study added to the Diocesan website.

To ensure the credibility of the Award, an independent consultant from another diocese will be invited to visit a sample number of successful schools to examine some of the evidence cited in their application. The school will receive appropriate notice of this visit in order to collate the evidence.

The Standards

Success is measured by good/best or innovative practice within 'Church School Distinctiveness' that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it. This practice may be in any one of the five areas:

1. what makes our church school distinctive
2. ethos and environment
3. worship
4. religious education
5. personal development

The scheme will recognise **good practice** where there are clear indications that the implementation:

- has explicit links to improving church school distinctiveness;
- has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it in any of the five areas of 'Church School Distinctiveness';
- is a feature of the work of the school and contributes towards the realisation of the school's aims;
- is supported by good planning in the initial stage and the longer term;
- emanates from a *need* identified through research, evaluation or analysis;
- is disseminated across the school and wider community and leads to **best practice**.

The scheme will recognise **best practice** when good practice is:

- improved as a result of evaluation and refinement;
- embedded in the daily life of the school and wider community;
- a feature of the work of the school and contributes towards the enhancement of the school's aims;
- known and recognised as a strength by members of the wider school community and
- planned to be sustained.

Innovative practice will be recognised where it is new or imaginative and has value, and is within 'Church School Distinctiveness'. It is also practice that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it and:

- involves new, creative or different approaches that add to the school's ethos and distinctiveness;
- is a modification or adaptation of recognised good practice which brands it as different to the current practice of the school or of church schools generally;
- arises from research or develops as a result of new ideas or thinking;
- is groundbreaking and
- has distinctive value.

The Diocese Of Blackburn

Award Scheme for Church School Distinctiveness

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible to apply for a Church School Distinctiveness Award?

All Diocesan schools are eligible to apply, though they must be members of the Family of Church Schools. Application and assessment are free and all successful schools receive certificate.

Applications will be received once a year, by the end of September. Awards will be accredited in November.

Successful schools will be invited to attend the award ceremony, which will be part of Education Sunday service in Blackburn Cathedral.

What does the Award accredit?

Whilst the application needs to be set in the context of 'Church School Distinctiveness', it is the successful implementation and the impact of practice on the school community, or any part of it, that is accredited through this Award.

Consequently, the application needs to explain how the school has undertaken:-

- a self evaluation review
- careful planning
- effective management of change
- improvement in resources
- professional development
- impact on the school community or any part of it

leading to improvements in 'Church School Distinctiveness'.

Effective applications focus on a specific area within 'Church School Distinctiveness' e.g. any of the 5 areas

6. what makes our church school distinctive
7. ethos and environment
8. worship
9. religious education
10. personal development

and are evaluative rather than descriptive.

Why are there different standards within the Award?

The standards are intended to help schools recognise and achieve improvement in any of the five areas of 'Church School Distinctiveness'. Success is measured by the positive impact of the practice on the school community or any part of it.

The different standards are not intended to be hierarchical with one of higher worth than another, but merely reflecting the nature of the practice that is the context for the application.

The scheme will recognise **good practice** where there are clear indications that the implementation:

- has explicit links to improving church school distinctiveness;
- has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it in any of the five areas of 'Church School Distinctiveness';
- is a feature of the work of the school and contributes towards the realisation of the school's aims;
- is supported by good planning in the initial stage and the longer term;
- emanates from a *need* identified through research, evaluation or analysis;
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- known and recognised as a strength by members of the wider school community and
- planned to be sustained.

The scheme will recognise **innovative practice** that is new or imaginative and has value, and is within 'Church School Distinctiveness'. It is also practice that has a positive impact on the school community or any part of it and:

- involves new, creative or different approaches that add to the school's ethos and distinctiveness;
- is a modification or adaptation of recognised good practice which brands it as different to the current practice of the school or of church schools generally;
- arises from research or develops as a result of new ideas or thinking;
- is groundbreaking and
- has distinctive value.

Does the practice which is the context for the application have to be ‘leading edge’ or unique within the Diocese?

No. We recognise that all schools are at different stages of development and what may be new or imaginative and has value for one school, could be a long accepted area of practice in another. Provided the practice has a positive impact on the school community, or any part of it, and the change in practice is managed well and leads to demonstrable improvement in ‘Church School Distinctiveness’, then it is eligible for consideration.

How does the accreditation process work?

A school cannot apply for an Award until it has committed to the Award Scheme – by completing a one-page form providing contact details and a signature. To obtain a form, please contact Jean Hornsby, who is based at the

Education Office,
Church House,
Cathedral Close,
Blackburn.
BB1 5AA
Telephone 01254 503070

(or email jean.hornsby@blackburn.anglican.org.uk). Commitment is free of charge and all committed schools receive a Certificate of Commitment.

Committed Schools then apply for an award on a short application proforma. Jean Hornsby can provide the form or it can be downloaded in Word format from www.blackburn.anglican.org (the Blackburn Diocesan website).

Applications are assessed by a panel that has an appropriate combination and representation from the following:

- A member of the Board of Education
- The Deputy Director of Education
- A member of the School’s Committee
- The Senior School Adviser
- The School Adviser for secondary schools
- A diocesan adviser
- A head teacher
- A parish priest or minister
- A governor

One of the recognised strengths of the award is that schools' practice is being assessed by experienced Diocesan officers and educational practitioners. Members of the accreditation panels have been chosen for their credibility with their colleagues and have proved extremely rigorous in their work, providing a strong level of quality assurance.

It is also planned that a representative sample of applications will be validated by visits to the schools by an independent diocesan consultant from another diocese.

What sort of evidence is required?

A strong element of the philosophy of this Award is the concept of 'professional trust'. If a head teacher states on his/her application that an area of practice is effective, and this is backed up by the testimony of the Chair of Governors, parish priest or minister and by relevant data, we believe it should be given appropriate credence.

Nevertheless, schools are asked to submit lists of pertinent evidence on their application forms. A small selection of key evidence is identified by the accreditation panel and requested in advance to support the formal assessment process. Should any evidence cited in an application not be available, or is inadequate, the application will be disqualified.

Guidance Application Form

Specific area of practice to be accredited:

Please be specific about the area of practice you wish to be considered for accreditation

Initial success criteria:

Identify exactly what you were hoping to achieve through the change in practice. Success criteria from your school development plan could be used here.

	Source of evidence (Suggested)
<p>What was the starting point for the practice? Explain how the need for this change in practice was originally identified. A brief outline of the school context and existing practice in the area you aimed to develop would be helpful here.</p>	<p>Diocesan School's Self Evaluation Check List, SIAS report, Ofsted report, School Development Plan.</p>
<p>What were the significant milestones and actions in its development? Outline the key changes that took place – preferably with dates. You may want to identify key appointments, specific training, new resources and any re-organisation. A key aspect of this question will be outlining any barriers to change that you encountered and how you overcame them.</p>	<p>School Development Plan, INSET records, teacher and support staff planning, Adviser reports, Performance Management targets (non-attributable), staff meeting minutes, Governors minutes, School Council minutes, revised policy documents, teacher planning.</p>
<p>Which members of the school, church and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role? For example – clergy, church members, church groups, church councils, staff, governors, local businesses, local community groups, diocesan officers or advisers, other Christian educational institutions, national bodies e.g. National Society.</p>	<p>Newsletters, parental feedback , (both formal and informal) Headteacher Reports to Governors, church magazines, worship initiatives, letters of support.</p>
<p>How has the practice been modified or improved during development? How did you respond to your on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of changes to practice? Were there any amendments to the original thinking/ planning? If so, why?</p>	<p>Diocesan School's Self Evaluation Check List, evaluations of School Development Plan, examples of display.</p>

<p>What has been the impact of the project on practice within ‘Church School Distinctiveness’ and how has this had a positive impact on the school community or any part of it? How has this been measured? What is now different and better in terms of impact on achievement, teaching, learning, enjoyment, attitude, self – esteem and relationships with individuals and groups within and beyond the school community? Bear in mind the 5 areas of Church School Distinctiveness:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. what makes our church school distinctive 12. ethos and environment 13. worship 14. religious education 15. personal development <p>How do you know? How did you ‘measure’ these improvements?</p>	<p>This will depend on the nature of the practice.</p>
<p>What are the next stages in the development process? How will you seek to develop this practice further? Do you have plans to amend the practice still further in the light of your evaluations?</p>	
<p>Do you believe this practice could be replicated or developed in other church schools? In what ways? What specific features of this project could be replicated in other schools? What are the main lessons you learned from this development ? What aspects are unique to your own school? How do you feel that your experience could be shared effectively?</p>	
<p>Any other comments you wish to add:</p>	

Signature _____

Date _____

