



# The Distinctive Church School

## First Impressions

# Introduction

'More than Caring and Sharing...'

'The presence of the Spirit of God, in a place where a community of faith is itself open to the working of that Spirit... The 'lived-outness' of faith, treasured and committed to' (Cox, 2011)

## First impressions count

Church of England schools aspire to provide unconditional welcome and hospitality to visitors, through authentic expression of the Christian faith – the commitment to, and living out of a Christian vision and associated Christian values.



Stepping over the threshold, first impressions are a powerful influence. The first step in a relationship that will shape through time, visitor opinions on the ethos and associated culture of a school – its core vision, associated values and day-to-day life.

The ethos embodies the values advocated not only by the school, but by the parish and its wider community.

From the moment a visitor looks online to your website, and steps into the school grounds and buildings, is the Christian Distinctiveness of your school clearly evident?

This document will support schools to further develop, share and celebrate their Christian Distinctiveness, focusing upon school websites, logos, signage, documentation, and the main entrance to the building, to allow visitors to become more aware of the school's Christian foundation.

# Website

The first place that new parents, prospective staff and inspectors will look for information about the school, is the website.

Effective websites should promote the school's core Christian vision and core Christian values, celebrate high quality Collective Worship, RE and SMSC provision, and share good news stories of successful partnership work with the parish and wider community



**Children of Team 2  
Lead Collective  
Worship**

The children of Team 2 lead Collective Worship and were looking at how to make the world a...

Posted On 17 Jul 2018



### **Easter Service with the Archbishop of York**

A lovely selection of pictures from our Sigglesborne Church of England Academy Easter Service at St Lawrence Church with the Archbishop of York.

Posted On 26 Mar 2018



### **Newsletter – June 2018**

Fabulous News Mrs Wrightson and her husband are pleased to announce that they are expecting...

Posted On 11 Jun 2018



### **Community Christingle Service**

Please see our separate guidance document, which supports schools to develop their websites to fully reflect and promote the Christian Distinctiveness of their school.

<http://dioceseofyork.org.uk/supporting-schools/help-for-schools/values-and-distinctiveness/>

# School Logo

- Does your school logo represent the Christian Distinctiveness of your school, and its Christian vision and associated Values?
- Has its design been shaped by all stakeholders?
- Does it reflect your current Church School journey?



## Case Study: Egton VA Primary School

Egton CE VA Primary School installed a new stained glass window in the school's newest classroom, with help from local artists, craftsmen, and the school's children. Local stained glass artist Alan Davis created the window, which shows the schools logo with a cross and fish.

Headteacher Liz Orland said, "The children are delighted with the window, especially as Alan involved them so much in its making. Right from the beginning of the process, he showed the children early designs of the window so they could help choose the colours. All the children visited Alan's glass workshops earlier in the year to see the window being put together, and they tried writing on the glass and tried the tools Alan uses. The window was installed by our local blacksmith in Egton, James Godbold, who also made the frame.



"The window reflects the school logo, showing St Hilda's cross, a salmon from the river Esk, water and the moors and farmland. All the symbols in the window reflects aspects of our school, with the cross and the fish as Christian symbols, and the river and landscape showing the place we serve."

# School Signage

What greets visitors as they enter your school grounds?



- Does your school signage indicate you are a Church of England school?
- Does it include a Christian symbol? Does it include the Diocese of York logo?
- Does it include a further Christian statement about your core Christian Vision or core Christian Values?
- Is there a Church-school notice board outside the main school entrance in the school grounds, highlighting recent key events and church services?



# School Entrance

- How explicit is your Christian Distinctiveness in the visitor entrance to the school?
- Is your core Christian Vision, and associated values evident? You may have banners/posters with images and bible quotes linked to your core Christian Vision and Values.
- Is there a display linked to the current values or collective worship themes? Is there a central reflection area linked to the Anglican Church year?
- Are there Christian symbols, words, artefacts, and artwork declaring the Christian nature of the school?
- If you have a rolling screen in the entrance, is the presentation celebrating Church School good news stories? Special Church celebrations for example, high quality work in RE, SMSC enrichment activities?
- Do you have a Church School Visitor book, detailing your Church School journey this year, highlighting all key activities and events?
- Is there a picture of the local Church, and a Church school information board, highlighting recent key events, church services, church-school community projects, and charity work?
- Is there an information board identifying your Foundation Governors, Church School Council and Pupil Church School group?
- Is there a welcome from a pupil to a new visitor, from your pupil Church School group?



# School Documentation

Do school letterheads, newsletters, greetings cards, policies and other documentation highlight you are a Church of England school? Is your Christian Vision and associated values evident?

Does your school newsletter contain Church School updates including the current Collective Worship or value focus, news from RE and SMSC enrichment, partnership work with the parish and wider community?

Is pupil progress and attainment in RE regularly shared with parents through general termly reports?

## Examples from our family of schools



## St. Mary's CE VC Primary School, Askham Richard Church School Booklet

In the school entrance we have booklet which helps explain what it means to be a CE Primary School. It contains information on:

- Mission Statement
- Core Christian Values
- A message from our vicar
- Our Parish Church
- Foundation Governors
- Our school prayer
- Collective Worship
- Responses used in Collective Worship
- Christian Values

The aim is to provide an overview of the life of our School, as well as introducing our vicar and Foundation Governors and their roles undertaken.

In the classroom...



Around school...



### What does it mean to be a Church of England Primary School?

At play and free time...



Out on visits and in our community...





# Resources

**Church of England Education Office**

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education>

[www.christianvalues4schools.org.uk](http://www.christianvalues4schools.org.uk)

**Practical resources**

*Living Values*, Shahne Vickery <http://www.imaginer.co.uk/jumping-fish-publications/>

*Home School Values*, Shahne Vickery and Carolyn Wright

<http://www.imaginer.co.uk/home-school-values/>

Values in Action, Shane Vickery <http://www.imaginer.co.uk/values-in-action/>