

Chaplaincy in Church Schools

A Guidance
Paper



'A strong chaplaincy is a great asset to a school. This guidance is an invaluable first step for schools considering whether establishing a chaplaincy is the right next step. I would encourage all church school governing bodies to use this material with Headteachers, Clergy and other parish representatives to help determine the way forward for chaplaincy in their schools.'

The Rt Revd Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

November 2017

Introduction

This material is intended to provide guidance and support to the partnership between parishes and schools through chaplaincy. This guidance takes account of current thinking in school chaplaincy—such as represented in SCALA's¹ 'A School Chaplain's Vade Mecum' and the emerging 'National Standards'. This resource is not provided to **encourage or suggest**² the creation of chaplaincy but to help decide whether a chaplain (chaplaincy) is needed. Along the way, it should help address, or at least raise, many of the questions that occur when undertaking this step. School chaplaincy cannot be established lightly; there are commitments, expectations and responsibilities on all sides to be taken into account.

To begin with we offer a simple definition of chaplaincy: which refers specifically to state church schools and academies:

'Chaplaincy is spiritual, pastoral and educative work within an institution which serves the life and members of the school. While driven by faith and mission, this work is based in and determined by the context in which that work takes place. Thus the work is defined, in the first place, by the needs of the school.'

A chaplain is:

- an authorised person³ who brings this work about within a professional and accountable framework.

A chaplain is not:

- a person with a label that has been automatically applied, or given as an honour;
- appointed without definition and accountability;
- someone who proselytises.

The Diocese of Oxford has a wide range of schools, thus there is scope for a range of approaches to and models of chaplaincy. While it may be possible to provide an overview of what chaplaincy might be, each individual circumstance will require specific adaptations and adjustments. Chaplaincy is to be provided for everyone, of all faiths or none. **If you considering this step please speak to your ODBE School Link Adviser in the first instance.**

The following sections will help to fill out more details of what chaplaincy might look like in specific situations:

1. **Why have a chaplain or chaplaincy?**
2. **Benefits of having a chaplain or chaplaincy**
3. **Forms of chaplaincy**
4. **Chaplaincy from the church perspective**
5. **Chaplaincy from the school's perspective**
6. **A team approach**
7. **Diocesan School Chaplaincy Reference Group**
8. **Sample job description**
9. **Generic person specification**

¹ School Chaplains and Leaders Association

² But by the same token this paper is not intended to **discourage** the creation of chaplaincy either!

³ 'Person' is used here for simplicity; Chaplaincy can be undertaken by a team (see 6a). Note that chaplains do not need to be ordained though there may be a need for a Bishop's Licence.

Chaplaincy in Church Schools – A Guidance Paper

There are two appendices: Appendix 1 provides some notes on the Six Key Dimensions of Chaplaincy (see section 2) and Appendix 2 lists the recommendations from the National Society report on Chaplaincy 'The Public Face of God'⁴.

Both the person specification and the job description are *outlines* designed to give a head-start to the process. They should not be used as they stand.

⁴ 'The Public Face of God' <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2063650/nschaplaincyreport.pdf>

1 Why have a chaplain or chaplaincy?

The chaplaincy is established in response to need. The need can be met through the work of a single chaplain or through the creation of a chaplaincy team. Chaplains and/or members of the chaplaincy team can be lay or ordained and may also be part of a multi-faith provision.

The need can be identified in various ways, such as:

- a concern for spiritual, mental and/or emotional well-being;
- the school could want to support the expression of its values;
- to support faith development in the school;
- a wish to enrich the SMSC opportunities and explorations in the school;
- a school might be seeking to strengthen the pastoral quality of its ethos;
- the school wants to enhance the quality of learning behaviour through promoting reflective attitudes within the community;
- a wish to develop stronger liturgical dimensions in worship;
- wanting to build a bridge between the school and the communities it serves.

2 Benefits of having a chaplain or chaplaincy

These are some of the issues that should be positively affected by the creation of a chaplaincy in a school:

- Improved quality of relationships—the chaplain both models and encourages good relationships within the school, providing a role model for staff and pupils in relating to and serving the needs of others.
- The structured creation of opportunities to reflect upon and consider life choices and behaviours. This can include SMSC and PSHCE as well as worship and RE (eg by supporting tutorial groups/teaching aspects of curriculum/ lunchtime 'clubs'/pastoral support of individuals...).
- The chaplain/chaplaincy provides a visible focus of faith. An accessible forum for faith in the school which is consistently positive and inclusive.
- There is felt to be a benefit to staff - a material impact on the quality of life for staff.
- In the context of state schools and academies, chaplaincy is offered without expectation, and is inclusive. The faith centre would clearly be Christian (Anglican) but this is the source of the work not the aim or end-point.
- It creates a relational bridge between the school and its community. This works in two directions and endeavours to develop the reciprocal relationships between school and church.
- Gives direct access to both local and diocesan church personnel and provision—courses, events etc.
- Is a faith resource for the school.
- May be able to offer liturgical support for worship.

3 Forms of chaplaincy

May vary to include

- A designated person who spends a specified time in school
- A member of the local church team who is given the responsibility of ‘chaplaincy’ at the school
- A team of people who fulfil the chaplaincy role
- A team that may include clergy and/or lay people
- A team that may include persons of different faith
 - The team may consider inclusion of ‘non-faith’ views such as humanism
- A co-ordinated group of clergy and lay people from local churches and congregations

The form of chaplaincy must take account of the structures, contexts and needs of the schools which it serves.

4 Chaplaincy from the church perspective

From the diocesan perspective school chaplaincy is built upon these main themes:

- Service
- Missional Theology
- Working with the learning communities
- Inclusive working—for all faiths and none

Service

Chaplains and chaplaincies primarily serve the institutions in which they work through building up good relationships. This can be complementary to the ‘ordinary’ role of parish clergy having a strong relationship with a school. The service might be part of the relationship with a local parish. It should not *replace* that relationship but should be serving specific areas of need in the school as previously discussed.

Missional Theology

From a church perspective, the chaplaincy is *missional* in the broadest sense. The concept of *Missio Dei* – God’s Mission – recognizes God is at work in the world, seeking to bring life in all its fullness (e.g. reconciliation, good relationships, wholeness and human flourishing). Participation in this mission has been demonstrated historically by the Churches commitment to excellent holistic education in local schools. This mission endeavours to develop the reciprocal relationships between school and church community, forming a relational bridge between the two. The theological implications of this will need some careful thought, in particular the understanding of a theology of children and young people. There could be some significant implications for the parish.

The chaplaincy inevitably, will be within a parish, but roles between chaplain/chaplaincy and church staff are not to be blurred. The school setting is distinct and will have a differing set of expectations and norms to the liturgical/congregational setting of the church. **Therefore, there needs to be an agreement/contract between the school, ie the strategic leaders of the school (headteacher and governing body), and the chaplain.** This must still be the case if the local vicar (or other member of church staff) is deemed to be chaplain. This maintains the distinctions between church staff in their parish roles and the chaplaincy. It also provides clarity—particularly where the local clergy are well known in the school and often make ‘informal’ visits which are not necessarily linked to any

chaplaincy. In some circumstances, chaplains might work across a group of schools such as a MAT. This could include a range of sizes and types of school. In this circumstance, the agreement will take account of the needs and contexts of the trust's schools.

It is particularly important that the established work of parish clergy in schools, such as commonly identified in SIAMS inspections, does not become compromised by the informal use of such labels as 'chaplaincy role'. This work is highly valued of itself and makes very significant contributions to school life without any labels or specific agreements.

Chaplains will follow the **school's** safeguarding policy which, due to the sensitive relationships involved is likely to include the need for a school DBS and school specific training.

Working with the Learning Communities

Chaplains will need to have a good grasp of the ways in which schools work. It will be important for chaplains to experience the life of the school as it is lived. This will involve some informal visits and the chance to join in the whole range of activities found in a school. There may well be some need for some professional development to be made available to the chaplain as part of their induction into the role.

Inclusive working—for all faiths and none

A vital strand of work in schools is the willingness and ability to engage with faith wherever it is found. This extends even to 'faith in no faith', it cannot be said that some adherents of atheist humanism or secularism do not show great faith in their endeavours. This is a really positive and rewarding part of the chaplain's role, to make faith visible and tangible in the school and to provide a context in which everyone can feel comfortable expressing and living their faith to the full.

Parishes in particular will need to take great care if they feel it appropriate to establish a chaplaincy. Before doing so there are some very specific questions which need to be considered such as:

- Is a chaplaincy needed at all?
- What will it add to the relationships within the school?
- What will be the implications for school/church relationships?
- Have any alternatives been considered?
- How will the chaplain(s) be appointed?
- How is the chaplaincy to be sustained?
- How is the chaplain/chaplaincy resourced? By parish or school?
- What is the relationship between the home parish of the chaplain parish and the school?
- How is the chaplaincy to be given the necessary skills?
- How will the chaplaincy be recognised as distinct from 'ordinary' parish involvement?
- What training will be provided for/expected of the chaplain?
- How will the chaplain be supervised?

As a diocese, we are establishing a network of school chaplains for mutual support and to provide a forum for training.

5 Chaplaincy from the school's perspective

The basic driving force for a chaplaincy is the context and identified needs within the school. Effective school chaplaincy demands a good understanding of mission, an appreciation of the learning needs of children and a defined place in the school's staffing structure. The chaplaincy will have the school's values as one of its central tenets.

The school leadership should work with the church to establish clearly what the chaplaincy will be working to achieve. This can be in terms of soft outcomes but must be SMART - specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-based.

Chaplains are expected to work in a manner which is complementary to the vision and aims of the school. However, it is understood that chaplaincy has a distinct quality which must be discernible in all of the work of the chaplain/chaplaincy team. The chaplaincy will both be part of, and contribute to, the ethos of the school by playing a full part in the spiritual journey of the school itself.

The chaplain will link worship with such areas as: SMSC, PSHE, Emotional Literacy. This will include liaison with appropriate members of staff.

There will be significant differences in the work of chaplains across the range of schools represented in the diocese (infant, junior, primary, first, middle and secondary). The detailed features of each context need to be explored order that the chaplaincy can be as effective as possible.

Part of the chaplain's role is to create effective communication between the school, the community and the local church(es).

The chaplain will have opportunities to work with:

- Students in lessons
- Worship/Assemblies
- School's own worship teams
- Open the Book teams
- Reflective activities such as prayer spaces
- Trips
- Community gatherings
- Festivals

Schools will need to be aware of potential conflicts of interest eg teaching conflicting with pastoral concerns. This specific example is a challenge when a chaplain has to act in a disciplinary manner in a classroom and they also meet with the child concerned who has been referred to the chaplaincy team by the school's pastoral service. The child can easily become unclear about the way in which the chaplain relates to them in differing situations. (This is a real-life example)

Meetings in school may follow these patterns:

- Line management/appraisal meetings, these will include clear accountability and the establishment/review of working objectives;
- Team meetings alongside SLT, welfare team, worship planning group;
- Meetings of governors.

An important note:

The establishment of the chaplaincy should **not** be seen as an honour or reward for clergy or children's workers. Neither is the chaplaincy an evangelistic role, this is **not** appropriate in a state school context.

6 A team approach

One of the possibilities may be for a **chaplaincy 'team'** to be set up; this might be appropriate in a large secondary school or across a Multi-Academy Trust.

Team notes:

- Teams need to have a designated leader who is accountable for the team;
- There will be a need to take care to plan involvement to ensure continuity and clarity for the school;
- Teams may want to identify different areas of expertise within the group e.g. assemblies, pastoral work;
- Liaising with volunteers and other groups such as Open the Book;
- The team leader need not be the local incumbent. This is especially important in a MAT chaplaincy. The leader will have to:
 - act as liaison between the school(s) and church(es);
 - ensure effective and efficient communication within the team;
 - take a co-ordinating role in planning.

These guidelines may help in chaplaincies in **Independent Schools** but it is recognised that these schools have their own foundations and may well have historically established chaplaincy agreements. These agreements may also include or refer to aspects which would not be permissible in a state school. The reference group is committed to working with school/educational chaplaincies in all places.

7 Diocesan School Chaplaincy Reference Group

A joint group has been set up which includes representatives from the ODBE, the Board of Mission and clergy who are currently chaplains or have extensive experience of chaplaincy.

The reference group is set up to:

- create and consider models of chaplaincy appropriate to the many situations in the diocese;
- provide theological and reflective support for chaplaincy;
- provide educational and pedagogical support for chaplaincy;
- create a mechanism through which training can be provided;
- provide consultancy for schools/parishes considering the appropriateness of chaplaincy in their own situation;
- work within the development of chaplaincy in the diocesan vision;
 - monitoring this development
- give guidance on matters of accountability – this will include a link with safeguarding panel
- enable the creation of chaplaincies and providing support in sustaining them;
- signposting.

The **reference group/school advisers** can help at all stages of the process of identifying the need for chaplains in church schools. If you are considering chaplaincy, please get in touch – we are keen to create a supportive network of school chaplains across the diocese.

Initial contact should be made with Robin Sharples ODBE Principal Adviser:

telephone 07801 884402

robin.sharples@oxford.anglican.org

Members of Schools' Chaplaincy Advisory Group

Oxford Diocesan Board of Education

Chris Price-Smith – School Link Adviser

Robin Sharples – Principal School Link Adviser

Oxford Diocesan Board of Mission

Ian Macdonald - Diocesan Youth Adviser

The Revd Charles Chadwick - Parish Development Adviser (Archdeaconry of Dorchester)

The Revd David McLeod – Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Greenham

Rev Katie Windle – former independent school chaplain

The Ven Guy Elsmore - Archdeacon of Buckingham

8 Sample job description

The Chaplain has a recognised place within the school. This is an essential dimension of our provision and will provide a significant part of the context of learning. The post may require a Bishop’s Licence.

The Chaplain is accountable to and will:

	Model an attitude of service throughout the work involved in chaplaincy
	Demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct
	Lead the spiritual development of the whole community
	Work within the team particularly supporting the outworking and development of PSHE
	Ensure that the values of the school are upheld at all times within the distinctive work of the chaplaincy
	Support the policies and practices of the school
	Regularly audit and review provision and action to ensure consistent and continued impact within the community
	Provide resources and up to date information from faith communities (this may include research/networking)
	Work with a range of clergy and other church officers representing a range of practices and church tradition
	Provide pastoral support as appropriate for both staff and pupils of the school
	Provide a point of contact for pupils seeking a discussion of faith matters
	Provide a church profile within the school, representing the mission of the church
	Co-ordinate planning of chaplaincy activities—across the team where this is appropriate
	Create patterns of responsibility within the institution so that students and members of staff are encouraged to take their responsibility for their own spiritual well-being and development
	Liaise with external agencies in the provision of such experiences as Prayer Spaces
	Be able to take a lead in these (and similar) activities as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian union • Multi-faith forum • JAM club
	Have overall responsibility for the spiritual/reflective spaces in school including the ‘Faith Room’
	Develop appropriate patterns of experience to enrich the spiritual life and growth of all members of the community
	Work with staff to develop well-structured and resourced SMSC
	Develop the liturgical character of the school
	Take responsibility for their own well-being
In addition, the chaplain:	
	May be involved in the teaching of RE, PSHE and other cognate studies
	May be involved in planning/facilitation/leadership/co-ordination of worship

9 Generic Person Specification

The role of the chaplain is a vital part of the partnership between the church and the school. It requires the utmost care and sensitivity. The chaplain will need to bring a number of personal qualities to the post—these are outlined below. The post is subject to a Genuine Occupational Requirement—

The person appointed as chaplain will:	
	Have the following qualifications—these may vary with each context
	Demonstrate relevant experience—again context will determine what is needed
	Have the ability to respond to specific needs
	Be capable of mature theological reflection and the application of this reflection in a school context
	Possess excellent interpersonal skills, particularly listening skills
	Have flexible and responsive time management skills
	Show initiative in working alone
	Be able to play an appropriate role in a team
	Demonstrate effective communication skills
	Work effectively to build reciprocal links the local church
	Show emotional intelligence
	Demonstrate appropriate qualities and behaviours
	Have familiarity with SIAMS expectations
	Have awareness of Ofsted expectations and how the role might contribute to this
	Demonstrate a self-reflective and contemplative approach
	Undertake appropriate CPD

Appendix 1

The Six Key Dimensions of chaplaincy.

Further discussion of these dimensions can be found in ‘A Vital Ministry’⁵ by John Caperon and in the Church of England Report ‘The Public Face of God’.

Pastoral: This is perhaps the most common understanding of what a chaplain might do. The biggest challenge to this is probably *time*. Care needs to be taken to appreciate how a pastoral role might work effectively in today’s primary schools. When establishing this role, the question of who is being pastored needs to be considered; is it members of staff, pupils, parents, governors, trustees?

Liturgical: In a church school, the work of worship belongs to the community. SIAMS is clear that leadership of worship should be found amongst the adults and the children. However, guidance and support could well be the province of a chaplain, not to mention the possibility of the chaplain leading or facilitating worship themselves. There is a great deal of support for school worship in the diocese.

Spiritual: Exploration of spirituality is increasing in our schools with various models and approaches being evolved. The opportunities to work with various expressions of spirituality is challenging and a chaplain may be well placed to work with children and (perhaps especially) older students in exploration of feelings and reflections and how these might find effective expression – sometimes in religious terms.

Missional: The church school is the church’s mission. By its very existence, the church school is an expression of God’s love in bringing the gift of learning to everyone. Thus, a chaplaincy in a church school needs to take care to define carefully how it might understand mission. In a community school (or Academy) this mission will be differently defined but must not err toward proselytization.

Prophetic: There is a possibility of misunderstanding here. Prophetic does not refer to ‘telling the future’ but rather more to telling the truth. Finding effective ways of telling the truth are often challenging but a chaplain could play an important part in looking at how truth is told in today’s world – and by whom (eg Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela). This may well be a leading part of a chaplain’s role in a world of alternative facts and ‘fake news’.

Pedagogic: Whatever the other aspects of chaplaincy might be, it is the learning of children and young people that is at the heart of the endeavour. The chaplain will need to have a good understanding of the teaching and learning processes that are going on in the school. The context of these will vary from school to school and from parish to parish.

These are understood in different ways, the SCALA ‘Vade Mecum’ text is somewhat at variance with that of the Chaplaincy Central website for instance. However, these can form a helpful framework for thinking about how a Chaplaincy can make a constructive contribution to church schools.

⁵ A Vital Ministry - Chaplaincy in Schools in the Post-Christian Era – John Caperon (SCM Press)

Appendix 2

Recommendations from 'The Public Face of God' (Archbishops' Council Education Division 2014)

These recommendations have been 'dis-ordered' because a number of them refer to National Society (Church of England Education Office) action and are not appropriate for action at diocesan level. The recommendations which are currently being addressed (even if only in part) are immediately below. A second group of recommendations are appropriate but are not yet in the scope of current work. Some of these call for a mixture of diocesan and national action. All the recommendations from the report are listed here.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The National Society, in partnership with other NCIs and dioceses, should collate and publish models of good practice in school chaplaincy which take the variety of settings within which school chaplaincy operates.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Dioceses are urged to review their arrangements for the representation of school chaplaincy at deanery and diocesan level and for developing models of support and ministerial development that take into account the different needs of chaplains.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Dioceses should insist that all those exercising school chaplaincy roles do so under a License or Permission of Officiate, for clergy, or under an appropriate form of authorised lay ministry, for lay chaplains.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Dioceses are encouraged to raise the profile and understanding of school chaplaincy, for example, by ensuring that the details are included within the diocesan directory, Cycle of Prayer and parish details, as well as in an appropriate way with other sector ministries.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Dioceses are encouraged to provide regular opportunities for the sharing of good practice and critical reflection among school chaplains (those involved in other areas of ministry).

RECOMMENDATION 14

Each diocese is encouraged to include school chaplaincy within its own Strategic Plan, and within Mission Action Plans at each level.

RECOMMENDATION 15

In making parochial appointments, any Parish Profile should include reference to chaplaincy provision, as well as more general information about the schools or colleges within the parish that it serves.

Diocesan Level (or pertaining to the diocese) – not yet within the scope of current work.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Dioceses are encouraged to ensure that a discussion of chaplaincy is included within Ministerial Development Review for all those exercising such a role in schools.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Individuals exercising school chaplaincy roles should take responsibility for ensuring these are covered when setting the agenda for their MDR.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The National Society, in partnership with other NCI, dioceses, HEIs and theological educators, should develop a framework and professional development of school chaplains.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Dioceses are encouraged to offer regular opportunities to celebrate and affirm the ministry of school chaplains, for example, by meeting with the diocesan bishop or the appropriate member of their senior staff, by formally marking the appointment of licensing of new chaplains or by services for school chaplains and their Headteacher and/or Chairs of Governors in the cathedral.

National Level

RECOMMENDATION 1

To improve the accuracy of data about the scale and nature of school chaplaincy provision. New approaches to reporting this data should be developed in partnership with dioceses and with the National Church Institutions.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Specific attention should be paid to collecting data on lay chaplaincy, including that carried out by volunteers, initially through more detailed mapping of a limited geographical area, such as a diocese.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The National Society should suitably adapt and publish guidance for schools employing a chaplain, based upon the existing guidance for chaplaincy in FE Sixth Form Colleges.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The National Church should value chaplaincy as a resource of the church for the common good, including to continue to invest financially in its work.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The National Church should consider the implications of this Report for the future articulation of its strategy for ministry mission and for training and development, and consider further research into the impact of school chaplaincy.