



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION

# Strong schools for strong communities

Reviewing the impact of Church of England schools in  
promoting community cohesion

November 2009



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## Preface

BY THE REVD JANINA AINSWORTH, CHIEF EDUCATION  
OFFICER FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

“Schools can play an important role in extending opportunities for young people to meet others they wouldn’t usually meet through their own friends and family.”



*Revd Janina Ainsworth*

**In many of our rural villages and suburban estates, only two community services remain functioning at anything like the level of presence they possessed 20 years ago. They are the local state school, and the local Church of England church.**

With pubs, post offices and independent shops closing at a rapid rate, these last bastions of local services face a particular responsibility to support good relations across different sections of that local community. When it comes to maintained schools, that moral compulsion has been enshrined in a statutory duty to promote community cohesion since September 2007.

Schools can play an important role in extending opportunities for young people to meet others they wouldn’t usually meet through their own friends and family, even if they cannot carry the whole burden of trying to engineer a more cohesive society. They can make discussion and debate about issues relating to ethnicity, culture and religion part of every day learning. It is especially important, in situations where the majority of the school population is from one religious or cultural background, that students get ample opportunities to learn, play and build friendships with children of other groups.

Schools with a religious foundation have a particular role in modelling how faith and belief can be explored and expressed in ways that bring communities together rather than driving them apart. They can minimise the risks of isolating communities for whom religious belief and practice are core parts of their identity and behaviour. In Church of England schools that means taking all faith seriously and placing a high premium on dialogue, seeking the common ground as well as understanding and respecting difference.

Schools that have achieved the highest accolades from Ofsted – those that are making genuine headway in tackling inequality and promoting good relationships across different cultural, ethnic and religious groups – are those that are realistic about what they can achieve and how it can be measured.

Schools contribute most actively towards nurturing a shared sense of belonging across communities when they are clear about their own distinctive values and how that grounds their engagement with other groups at local, national and global levels. Promoting community cohesion is not about diluting what we believe to create a pallid mush of ‘niceness’. Nor is it about trying to make all schools reflect exactly the economic or cultural make-up of the nation.



“(Community cohesion) is about acting out the values articulated in the school’s mission statement in ways that serve and strengthen our human relationships with our neighbours.”

It’s about accepting as a starting point the fact that our schools reflect all sorts of historic and cultural local circumstances, and are different from each other in a whole variety of ways, including the values on which they are founded. Even within our schools, as the Archbishop of Canterbury has recently suggested, “a Christian institution is not necessarily one where everyone is drawn into the same patterns of moral life or discipline, but it is one where people are constantly being exposed to the challenge of living in such a way that justice and mercy and mutuality become visible”. Our Christian foundation places the strongest obligation onto Church of England schools to help children form relationships of mutual care and affection with people from every creed and background.

For church schools, community cohesion is more than ticking a box for the government. It is about acting out the values articulated in the school’s mission statement in ways that serve and strengthen our human relationship with our neighbours, whether they are the other school down the road or a charity in Africa.

It’s not always easy, and it can involve significant investment of time and resources – but then living out our faith is never the lazy option. That’s why I am so proud of the schools highlighted in the case studies section of this paper (pages 9-13).

It’s in this way that our schools will be showing how God’s love can transform society. And it’s then that they will be offering us tantalising glimpses of what His Kingdom might look like on earth.

**Revd Janina Ainsworth**  
Chief Education Officer, Church of England  
November 2009



# A study of recent Ofsted data assessing schools' progress on the duty to promote community cohesion and tackle inequality

BY PROF DAVID JESSON, UNIVERSITY OF YORK



**This review compares Ofsted's grading of the contribution that schools are judged to be making towards promoting 'Community Cohesion'.**

This is assessed as part of the 'Leadership and Management' section of a school's Section 5 inspection. In particular, DCSF and Ofsted guidance suggests that inspectors should look for evidence that schools have undertaken an analysis of their school population and locality and then created an action plan focused on engaging with under-represented groups outside the school and between different groups within the school itself. It also considers aspects like links with other local community organisations, and global connections.

My review has a specific remit to compare the 'Community Cohesion' grades aggregated across (for Primary Schools):

- Church of England Faith Schools (207 schools)
- Other Faith Schools (66 schools)
- Community Schools (429 schools)

*These evaluations are taken from inspections conducted during June 2009.*

While for Secondary Schools we compare inspection grades for:

- Faith Schools (predominantly CofE and RC) (74 schools)
- Community Schools (271 schools)
- Foundation Schools (66 schools)

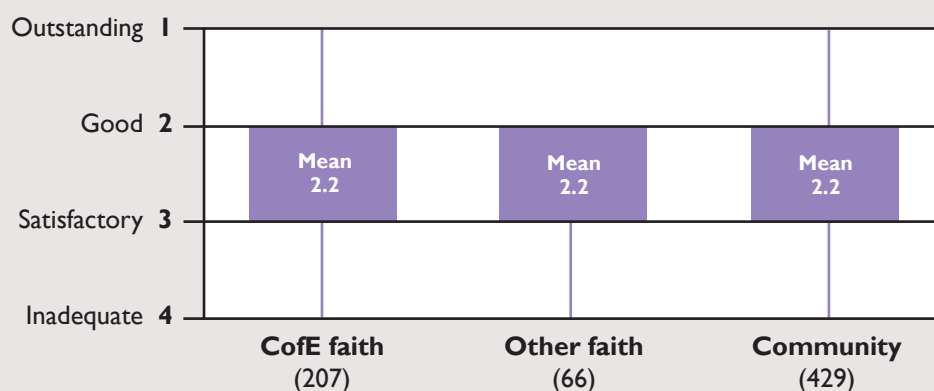
*These evaluations are taken from inspections conducted between March and June 2009.*

**Diagram 1 (overleaf) shows the range and mean values of inspection grades across the three Primary school types.** It is immediately evident that there is no difference between the types on this measure.



Diagram 1

### Ofsted grading of community cohesion for primary schools

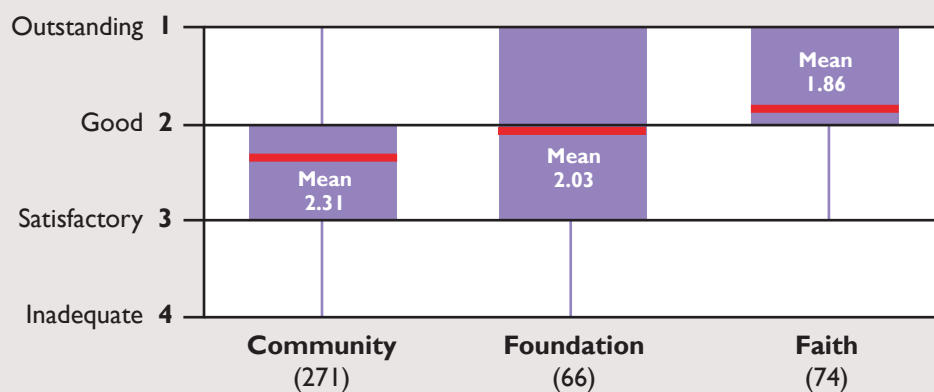


Primary schools tend to serve relatively small areas and what this finding indicates is that for the communities they serve there is no difference between these three types by virtue of their governance. Each type of Primary school shows a similar profile for the community cohesion measure.

**Diagram 2 shows the contrasting situation for Secondary schools:**

Diagram 2

### Ofsted rating of community cohesion for secondary schools of differing types



In the secondary sector there are relatively fewer Faith schools than in the primary sector and for this reason we have grouped **all** Faith schools (voluntary aided and voluntary controlled) together for comparison purposes.



The contrast with the inspection gradings for Primary schools could not be starker: the mean level for Faith schools as 1.86 is substantially (and significantly) higher than for Community schools; it is also higher (though not significantly so) then for Foundation schools.

The difference with Foundation schools is revealing since these schools have similar responsibilities for admissions as do voluntary aided Faith schools. Faith schools nevertheless are shown to have higher gradings on Community Cohesion than either Community or Foundation schools – so the ‘charge’ that Faith schools simply ‘select’ their own ‘types’ of pupils and so add to the divisions within communities by so doing receives absolutely no support from this Ofsted evidence. The facts appear to be rather the reverse – Faith schools contribute substantially more to Community Cohesion than do either Community or Foundation schools.

As far as secondary school inspection judgments are concerned not only do Faith schools have higher *average* ratings, but the *range of outcomes* places them well ahead of those in Community or Foundation schools. In fact there are relatively few Community or Foundation schools that are graded anywhere near those of Faith schools.

**The following table gives the detailed breakdown of inspection gradings in each type:**

Table 1

Grading	1 Outstanding	2 Good	3 Satisfactory	4 Inadequate	
School type	Percentage awarded each inspection grade				No. of schools
Community	14%	43%	42%	1%	271
Foundation	26%	48%	23%	3%	66
Faith	32%	49%	19%	0%	74

## SUMMARY

The evidence is very clear that Faith schools contribute more highly to Community Cohesion as judged by Ofsted inspection gradings than do Community schools.

There is no evidence from Ofsted Inspection judgments relating to ‘Community Cohesion’ that *primary schools* differ according to their governance. Church of England schools, other Faith schools and Community schools all have very similar ranges and average gradings.

For *secondary schools*, however, there is clear evidence that Faith schools are awarded substantially higher inspection gradings on this characteristic than Community schools. Faith school grades are similar to those in Foundation schools, but with **no** Faith schools being graded ‘Inadequate’.

This finding is particularly relevant to the debate about schools’ contribution to community cohesion – and runs completely counter to those who have argued that because Faith schools have a distinctive culture reflecting their Faith orientation and are responsible for



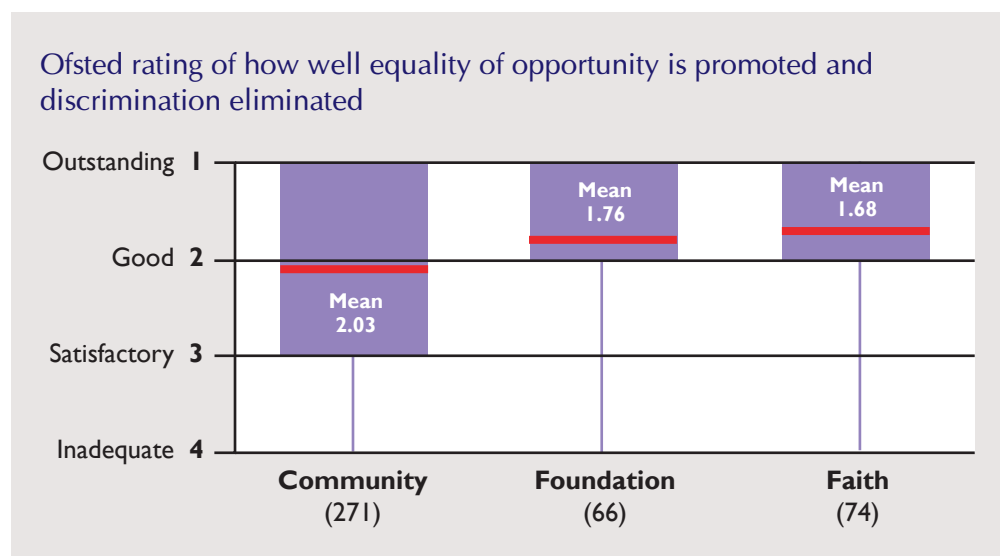
their admissions that they are 'divisive' and so are so contribute to greater segregation amongst their communities. This is clearly not supported by the most recent Ofsted Inspection evidence reported here.

The evidence is very clear that Faith schools contribute more highly to Community Cohesion as judged by Ofsted inspection gradings than do Community schools. Foundation schools, which also are their own 'Admission authorities' have similar gradings on this issue to those achieved within Faith schools.

## AVOIDING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

**Ofsted also reviews schools' characteristics for *How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated*. Gradings for secondary schools of the three types we have identified are presented in Diagram 3 below:**

Diagram 3



Here again the contrast between Faith schools and Community schools is clear. Faith schools achieve higher gradings on this aspect of their contribution to their pupils and their community. Foundation schools have, again, similar gradings to Faith schools but both of these types of school score more highly on this characteristic than do Community schools.

Taken together these results provide evidence that Faith schools play an important and positive role in both promoting Community Cohesion and Equality of Opportunity whilst taking positive steps in eliminating discrimination.



Table 2

Grading	1 Outstanding	2 Good	3 Satisfactory	4 Inadequate	
School type	Percentage awarded each inspection grade				No. of schools
Community	27%	46%	26%	1%	271
Foundation	44%	39%	14%	3%	66
Faith	49%	37%	13%	1%	74

(NB: almost half of all Faith schools were awarded Grade 1 – meaning that their practice here was ‘Outstanding’. This compares to just over a quarter of all Community schools being awarded this grade).

## CONCLUSION

It is very clear that Faith schools stand out as providing many examples of good practice as identified by inspection evidence.

The comparative element of this study shows that whilst all schools have a commitment to both of these factors and that no one type is universally successful, it is nevertheless very clear that Faith schools stand out as providing many exemplars of good practice as identified by inspection evidence collected over the past six months. This provides a useful corrective to some misguided assumptions about the roles that Faith schools play within their communities.

*Those who wish to maintain the fiction that has characterized much media comment in this area would do well to look at this evidence produced by the independent inspection regime which entirely discredits those opinions.*

**Professor David Jesson**  
University of York  
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## Forging our own school communities – starting with values

Being clear about what it means to be a Church of England school is the first step to forging open, positive relations with all other elements of the local, national and global community

**As the Revd Janina Ainsworth writes in her introduction to this report, one of the vital ingredients for schools in promoting communion cohesion is being confident in their identity as distinctive, inclusive and integral parts of the education system of this country. Being clear about what it means to be a Church of England school (or indeed a school designated as another faith) is the first step to forging open, positive relations with all other elements of the local, national and global community.**



The National Society is continually developing a website – [www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk](http://www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk) – which identify some of the distinctive values that undergird church schools. The 15 core values – including Service, Trust and Forgiveness – are introduced with brief theological reflections and examples of how schools have brought these values to life, through everything from collective worship to garden design and architecture. The website also contains questions and ideas for how staff and governors might engage with these values, and schools are encouraged to visit the site for inspiration and to upload their own experiences and ideas.

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican, Methodist and ecumenical Schools (SIAS) programme is designed to support schools in identifying and developing their special status as church-affiliated schools, and looks at the roles of collective worship and RE in assisting with this. Those inspecting schools as part of this programme are always keen to see examples of how such elements of school life are helping to foster close relationships with the local church, other faith groups and other community organisations. As such, SIAS inspections can prove to be both a useful catalyst and barometer for how schools are using their Christian identities to promote stronger communities. You can find much more about this programme via our website at: [www.natsoc.org.uk/siasinspection](http://www.natsoc.org.uk/siasinspection)



## Case studies – Learning from other schools' stories



**In order to demonstrate to Ofsted that schools are actively supporting community cohesion, they first need to show that they have undertaken an analysis of their school population and locality.**

This involves considering the context of their own school and comparing it to their local, national and global contexts. They also need to show that, as a result of this analysis, they have identified where they need to plan action, especially engagement with under-represented groups outside the school and between different groups within the school itself. Such activities need to be somehow measurable, at least in the experience and values that learners are able to articulate.

The three strands which the DCSF and Ofsted have employed to help schools plan such actions are faith, ethnicity and culture, and socio-economic. We have used these headings to help arrange our highlighted case studies from a number of English faith schools. These are aimed primarily at offering food for thought and a starting point for schools consider what community cohesion activities and initiatives they wish to develop for their own context.

Resources including further case studies, from faith schools and other types of school, are listed in the box on page 13.

### FAITH



*William Farr School*

**William Farr School** in Welton, Lincolnshire, is built on the site of a World War II Bomber Command Station. In recognition of the area's heritage and the school's Anglican foundation, the school has set up the 'Lawres Room' as a quiet space which houses a memorial dedicated to the RAF aircrew, 700 of whom gave their lives flying from the base during the war. Each day, two Year 8 students turn a page of the 'Book of Remembrance' and each year, the entire School Council attends the annual Welton Remembrance Day service in the parish church. In addition, the school has become a focus for collecting and displaying RAF memorabilia and welcomes visitors, many of whom are the descendants of aircrew, to view this material.

**Treales Church of England VA Primary School**, near Kirkham in Lancashire, is a very small rural school, keen to give its pupils an awareness of a range of faiths in addition to developing a distinctive Christian ethos. Ofsted found that students' "understanding of the difference between lifestyles and cultures in this small rural community compared with those in towns with mixed ethnic populations is developing well". Staff organise visits to a mosque and school in nearby Preston, which gives pupils an opportunity to meet peers from different faith groups informally as well as an authentic introduction to Muslim belief and practice.



Such visits to other places of worship are a regular hallmark of RE and cross-curriculum plans in church schools, and provide a clear opportunity to increase mutual respect and understanding across the community.



*Easton Church of England VA Primary School*

At **Easton Church of England VA Primary School** in Bristol, more than 80% of pupils come from Muslim families, with 50% of the school population coming from Somalia. Supporting families arriving from conflict zones is a key priority for this inner city school, which has adopted an 'open door' policy for parents to drop into the school to help their children with their first activities of the day and also give them an opportunity to discuss with trained staff a whole range of issues, such as access to other public services. The school also runs English for Speakers of Other Languages classes for parents to learn alongside their children, in addition to parenting classes and a range of other workshops.

Every class at Easton is linked with a contrasting class in either a different part of Bristol, a more rural part of the country, or somewhere overseas (links include schools in Uganda and Jamaica). The school has successfully fundraised over recent years to purchase a range of camping equipment, which means they can take pupils to other parts of the country and also invite other schools to stay on Easton's school field in their 10 large canvas tents.

Links with the Easton Christian Family Centre (an Anglican church) are good, and have assisted the school in building bridges with other local religious leaders who now regularly visit the school to talk about their faith. Such links have also enabled Easton staff to gain a better understanding of the Arabic classes run by local mosques which some students attend after school, and enabled them to offer insights from the school in areas such as behaviour management. In addition, pupils from Easton regularly visit less diverse schools in Bristol to talk about their faith and practice as a Muslim, Sikh, etc.

## ETHNICITY AND CULTURE



*'Africa' Arts Exhibition at St Ippolyts Church of England VA School*

**St Ippolyts Church of England VA Primary School**, near to Hitchin in Hertfordshire, largely draws students from their immediate area and so has a school population mostly of White British heritage. Staff dedicated a series of Arts Days to the theme of 'Africa' to boost global awareness within the school and address some of the children's preconceptions about the continent. Students took part in a wide range of activities including Djembe Drumming, Kisii Soap Carving, Batik, and designing Tribal Masks, all designed to showcase Africa as a vibrant and energetic nation. The school hosted a visit by a Zimbabwean artist who taught students some African songs, chants and dances, and the theme extended to the school canteen's menu, with African-style meals on offer. The event culminated in a special assembly in the hall before much of the arts and crafts were displayed in an Africa Exhibition in the school's main entrance. The school's PTA then took on the topic and used 'Shades of Africa' as a theme for their summer fair, inviting families and other guests from the local community into school. This term, the school is converting their interest in Africa into practical support for the Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal, raising £800 towards the fund which aims to provide fresh water in Ethiopia.

Schools in the Church of England Diocese of Leicester, which covers Leicestershire, are being encouraged to set up twinning arrangements with schools in their sister diocese in South India. The Diocese of Trichy-Tanjore, in the state of Tamil-Nadu, covers part of the region badly hit by the 2007 tsunami. Although the twinning relationship is only in its early



“Sharing experiences of school and home life through photo montages designed in class and striking up pen pal friendships with individual students has demolished some of the stereotypes held about Southern India and the living standards of many of its people.”

**Steven Clifford**

Headteacher  
Old Dalby C of E Primary School



stages, a number of schools have already made contact with the region, including **Old Dalby CE Primary School**. Staff there have been involved in a group of four schools – one other from rural Leicestershire and two from the city of Leicester – which together formed a partnership with a cluster of six large schools in southern India in 2007. The link has involved staff exchanging visits between the UK and India, and students at Old Dalby swapping photo galleries with their peers in India about their school and local area. Headteacher Steven Cliff says that, as well as helping build stronger relationships with the local secondary school involved in the project, pupils have benefited hugely from the international relationship: “Sharing their experiences of school and home life through photo montages designed in class and striking up pen pal friendships with individual students has demolished some of the stereotypes they held about Southern India and the living standards of many of its people. They now know that many Indian children like watching TV just as much as they do! They have also enjoyed exchanging instructions on traditional playground games, and trying them out.”

In the West Midlands, **Jesson's Church of England Primary School** in Dudley marked Refugee Week with a range of activities including the teaching of whole lessons in a foreign language – to illustrate the confusion and disorientation felt by new arrivals in the UK – and the experience of building temporary shelters and then having them destroyed. Staff report that the week “helped children to understand what it might be like to come from a foreign country and why they should be welcoming, especially as some of their classmates come from refugee communities.”

Year 7 students from **St George's Church of England Secondary School** in Gravesend, Kent teamed up with similarly aged students from Nord Pas de Calais specialist 'college' for dance in Roubaix. Over two terms, outside facilitators led sessions on identity, culture, integration and co-operation which culminated in a series of exchanges where participants enjoyed international food tasting, joint artwork, cultural visits, and shared dance. Students, parents and staff reported positive outcomes, particularly in fostering a greater appreciation of own and others' national and regional cultures and histories.

**Sibertswold Church of England Primary School** is a small school in rural Kent. A small group of students recently worked alongside six other primary schools in the Dover area and formed a link with a school in Brisbane, Australia, enabling the whole class to share creative work on each area's local heritage live over the internet. Students from Sibertswold shared their creative writing about historic events at Dover Castle, while their peers in Australia explained some of the history of the Aboriginal people and performed some traditional Australian music. Sibertswold is now developing links with a school in New Zealand and exploring the use of ICT solutions to enable similar virtual meetings to take place, helping broaden students' global horizons.



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC



“Partnerships with local businesses give pupils experiences that go beyond those they might routinely have in other schools”

**Ofsted Inspection Report**  
St John's Walworth Church of England  
Primary School

The recent Ofsted inspection for **St John's Walworth Church of England Primary School** in south London highlights how “pupils feel that they have a real say not just in the school, through the school council and their other responsibilities, but also in the wider community through their active involvement in local environmental and regeneration schemes that are revitalising the Elephant and Castle and the surrounding area.” This includes some children taking part in the ‘Junior Street Leaders programme’ which involved conducting an audit with subsequent recommendations for the improvement of the area in which they live. Other examples include a 14-week project where students worked with choreographers from a local dance studio and representatives of the new Strata Tower development to create a dance reflecting the shapes of the building's architecture and construction techniques used. The inspection report continues: “Partnerships with local businesses give pupils experiences that go beyond those they might routinely have in other schools, such as the annual trip for Year 6 pupils to see how *The Guardian* is produced. Pupils’ involvement in local history work commemorating Charlie Chaplin has also helped to broaden their horizons, alongside work on history celebrating the different cultural heritages represented in the school.”

While realising the aspirations of the ‘extended school’ can involve significant amounts of effort and resources, the fruits of that labour are readily on show at the **Marlborough Church of England School** in Oxfordshire. The school site hosts a regular book club for parents and other local residents, as well as a parenting workshops and a range of practical and recreational evening classes including ICT skills and yoga. During each school holiday, the extended school team run an activity programme open to any local young person aged six and above, offering a range of activities from pottery and sculpture to survival skills and a ‘School of Rock’ contest.

**David Young Community Academy**, a Church of England academy in east Leeds, has developed its own peer court to deal with the small minority of students who create problems both inside the academy and out on the neighbouring residential estate. A panel of staff and students sits every half term to consider the cases brought before them and implement restorative justice solutions. The success of the court has resulted in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust circulating a best practice paper to all its member schools about the initiative, while the local police and the Crown Prosecution Service are now exploring how the court model could be used more widely outside the academy to resolve issues involving young people.

The academy has also set up a Combined Cadet Force as part of the detachment linked to Leeds Grammar School, a leading public school in the city. As well as developing their life skills, young people from the economically deprived Seacroft estate from which the academy draws its students are now learning to ride horses, fly in RAF basic trainers, and share weekly sessions of adventure training, all alongside their peers from a very different type of school.

The David Young Community Academy has also recently been awarded £3.3m funding from the DCSF to build a community hub for the Seacroft estate, co-locating essential front line services to mitigate the social problems facing local residents and to provide facilities that will help raise aspirations and support both social and cultural regeneration in the area.



*Litter picking at St Mark's Church of England Junior School*

**St Mark's Church of England Junior School**, Cheltenham, has started to join in community clean-up days organised as part of the national 'Big Tidy Up' campaign. Students and staff recently joined local residents, council community rangers and PCSOs in collecting litter from parks and open spaces close to their school. Assistant Headteacher Chris Redpath sees the project as a way of contributing to the community as well as teaching children about environmental issues: "It's really important that the children understand there is a community out there – there is a whole range of people they can be in contact with and they can put something back into the community as well."

Church of England VA schools in **Leicestershire** are getting the chance to take part in a partnership scheme organised by the Diocese of Leicester, which is linking one rural and one urban school at a time and working with school staff to prepare a special residential programme. Hosted at Launde Abbey – a retreat centre set in 450 acres of parkland and close to Launde Big Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest – year 3 and 4 pupils from the two schools spend two days working together on a range of activities based around RE, history and nature. The pupils also share in 'circle time' together, expressing their reflections on the event and what they have learned from their peers. Comments from pupils include "I will remember these new friends for ever!" and "I now know that I can change my attitude, my new friends influenced me." Staff get an opportunity to plan the programme together in the quiet atmosphere of the Abbey, further cementing the cross-county links between the two schools.

## OTHER SOURCES FOR CASE STUDIES AND ADVICE

The Department for Children, Schools and Families' key guidance document on the duty to promote community cohesion can be found here, focusing on what schools can do under the headings 'Teaching, learning and curriculum', 'Equity and Excellence', and 'Engagement and extended services': <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion>

Case studies can be found via the following page: [http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community\\_cohesion\\_case\\_studies](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion/Community_cohesion_case_studies)

Or by searching the Institute for Community Cohesion's database at: <http://resources.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/GoodPractice/Projects/Default.aspx>

Most diocese have produced resources to support church schools exploring these areas. The Diocese of London, for example, produced advice in 2007 on dealing with interfaith issues in school life, available at: <http://schools.london.anglican.org/Policies/Multicultural%20Guidance%20March%202007.pdf>; the Diocese of Worcester published a guide exploring the experiences of church schools in contributing to community cohesion and in particular, how the SIAS process can help schools develop this: [www.everyfaithmatters.org.uk](http://www.everyfaithmatters.org.uk); and the Dioceses of Bradford, and Ripon and Leeds have produced a resource which links the global dimension and issues of social justice and sustainability with the Christian ethos of a church school; copies are available from [www.brleducationteam.org.uk](http://www.brleducationteam.org.uk).



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Reviewing the impact of Church of England schools in promoting  
community cohesion

**Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2009**

[www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/education)