Schools Chaplaincy

Introduction
- There are 65 Methodist Church Schools – 39 of these are partnerships with the Church of England
- 14 Methodist Independent Schools provide for both residential and day pupils
- In total 22,000 pupils are being educated in Methodist Schools
- Methodist Churches often have links with local Community Schools
- Many Methodist people already work or volunteer within schools

Exploring Further
Leading school assemblies and serving on governing bodies are perhaps the most familiar way for churches to be involved with local schools. Schools chaplaincy can take these relationships further by providing regular pastoral care in the school, help during times of crisis or bereavement or perhaps clubs and groups for pupils. A chaplain might be a regular visitor to the staff room, the playground or the school gate and would offer support to staff and school families and pupils as well as helping with worship in the school. There is great variety in school chaplaincy but in every case good chaplaincy work depends on first building relationships and confidence. In Church Schools chaplains have an important role in helping to create a Christian ethos for the school. In both Church and Community Schools chaplains always need to be aware that they are guests and must show respect for the diversity of the school community.

Getting Involved
There is enormous potential for individuals, Churches and Circuits to become involved with schools chaplaincy, but sensitivity to the particular needs of each school is needed. In Methodist Church Schools chaplaincy arrangements are made between the school and the local circuit. An individual may act as the chaplain or there may be a chaplaincy team to support the school. Wherever possible it is best to keep the roles of governor and chaplain separate in Church schools - governors may have to be involved in difficult decisions or even disputes in the life of the school, whereas chaplains need to be available to all members of the school community. Chaplains in Methodist Independent Schools are normally presbyters who may be appointed either by the school or by the Church. Independent School chaplains are often involved in teaching as well as pastoral care and worship. Some churches are developing relationships with their local Community Schools which include chaplaincy support – even if this term is not always used. If members of your Church are already involved with a local Community School is it possible to build on these relationships and perhaps even develop a chaplaincy service agreement between churches and school? Think carefully about what kind of support the school would welcome and what resources and training would you need in order to help. The Methodist Church has a Connexional Team Officer with responsibility for schools chaplaincy and is starting to build a network for schools chaplains. Please get in touch if you want to be involved.

*It is of course essential that Child Protection procedures are followed with great care in all schools chaplaincy work.*
Schools Chaplaincy Information:


Methodist Independent Schools http://www.methodisteducation.co.uk/content/index.asp


Cooling, T (2010) Doing God in Education. Theos


Tregale, D., (2011) Fresh Experiences of School Chaplaincy, Grove Books

Withers, M., (2010) Local Church, Local School, The Bible Reading Fellowship (wide ranging advice on church-school relationships including chaplaincy)


Organisations:

All Faiths and None (AFAN) inter-faith materials for 14-19 year olds http://afan.uk.net/

Chaplaincy Central A Christian network and resource hub for those involved in schools or FE chaplaincy. http://chaplaincycentral.co.uk/

SCALA (School Chaplains and Leaders Association) offers support and expertise in Christian chaplaincy, spirituality and leadership http://www.scala.uk.net/

The International Association for Children’s Spirituality promotes research and practice around children’s spirituality http://www.childrenspirituality.org/

Contacts:

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