

they can request a special visit from the Bishop's School Visitor to support them in their work. It would be especially helpful if the RE co-ordinator, in particular, could be given a regular opportunity to talk with the Visitor about their potential role.

- If you would like the Visitor to take on a specific task, give them advance warning and a proper briefing. This will allow them to prepare properly and make a purposeful, planned, contribution to the session. Don't ask them just to do "what you like" – the Visitor would like to be seen as part of the team, supporting your school's curriculum.
- Put the Visitor on the school's regular mailing list, so that they receive the letters that go out to parents and invitations to special events (not just the church services!). This will help the Visitor to look out for approaching events they can assist with, rather than hearing after the occasion how they *could* have helped.
- Remember that the Bishop's School Visitor role will work best once an open and trusting relationship has been developed between school and Visitor and the Bishop's School Visitor feels welcome. Do discuss this with your Visitor.

Advice to Schools on Making the Most of Your Bishop's School Visitor



The relationship between a school and its Bishop's School Visitor is a very personal one, which develops over time as people come to know and trust each other. Here are some suggestions to help that relationship grow:

A Friend of the School

- The Bishop's School Visitor is commissioned by the Bishop to be a friend of the school and is intended to be an active and supportive link between the central structures of the Diocesan Board of Education & Training and the schools. They are a "friendly face", and a "listening ear".
- The Visitor comes from "the Diocese", but is not visiting the school as an inspector or a spy! You can be certain that any confidential or personal information they hear from any member of the school community, or any support they offer, will be treated in confidence. The Visitor does, however, send a short annual reflection on their own activities in support of the school to the Diocesan Board of Education & Training.

What can the Visitor do?

- The Visitor has come to offer their help and skills, not to interrupt your day OR be entertained. If there is nothing specific the Visitor will be able to do on the day of the arranged visit, then do please suggest a change of date!
- Bishop's School Visitors may be invited to help with the Christian element of the RE programme. How many times do teachers think it would be useful to get someone in from the local church community, but can find no one prepared to visit? The Visitors are all used to working with children and will happily take on this role if requested, or put you in touch with someone who can assist.

- Many Visitors are prepared to take part in a school's collective worship programme on a regular (although not necessarily frequent) basis.
- Ask your Visitor for ideas about RE and collective worship, they may have resources of their own, and possibly time to spend searching out materials from the Diocesan lending collection as well.
- Would you like an extra volunteer to accompany you on a school visit? Ask your Bishop's School Visitor (especially if you are visiting Ely Cathedral or the local church and they can be an additional resource). Are you planning an activity day in school where their talents can be used?
- Visitors bring their own interests and expertise to their role – this might be music, drama, ICT, science, storytelling or skills of working with individuals or groups of children..... all of these talents are on offer to the school. They will also enjoy being asked to do things other than the specifically religious.
- Most of the Visitors have worked in the past in education in either a professional or voluntary capacity, and have some background knowledge of the education system. They can be used as sympathetic listeners by heads, teachers and governors on current school issues.

How can the Visitor and School work well together?

- Arrange an opportunity for the Bishop's School Visitor to meet with at least the vicar and foundation governors, or to attend a meeting of the whole governing body to explain their role.
- Make sure that all the school staff know who the Visitor is and what support they can offer. Let teachers know that