

## **1. Christian schools work for a new era**

Christian work in schools across the UK is facing significant change in the expectations of schools and opportunities they have available. Where schools missions, for example, might previously have been allowed and even encouraged, they are increasingly seen as inappropriate in a modern secular and pluralistic education system. Practical changes to the way schools are run mean that lunchtimes can be shorter and the opportunity and space to run Christian groups may be diminished. Pressure on teaching staff to cover the curriculum can also mean that there are fewer invitations to work in RE. These are important developments that challenge the traditional approach of Christian schools work both theologically and practically.

At the same time, opportunities to provide pastoral support for students, either individually or in groups, have increased and many schools projects have consequently expanded this area of their work. Many projects - including our own - are offering support for students in areas like anger management, or providing extra help with classroom support.

Whilst we strongly believe in providing pastoral support, we are also passionate about not losing the context to talk directly about our faith in a school. Finding the right opportunity, tone and language to do that is the challenge we have set ourselves. Over the last five years we've been exploring how we can do this: reimagining many of the traditional contexts - like a school assembly - as well as finding new ones. Much has been achieved but there is plenty still to be explored and developed.

We are now looking for the right person to take on this task, with the experience, creativity and calling to help us develop Christian schools work in this new educational context.

## **2. LCET's current work in schools.**

There are thirteen secondary schools in Luton (a Unitary Council with its own Local Education Authority). Two of these are part of the government's new Academy programme. The town is also in the early wave of the Building Schools for the Future programme and many of the schools are undergoing a significant refit and rebuild.

LCET works in every one of the local secondary schools, but concentrate our chaplaincy work on five, although eventually we want to expand this to all thirteen. The work is focused around three aims, seeking to connect our Christian faith with the spiritual development agenda within education:

1. Develop spiritual literacy: helping young people begin to give voice to their spiritual questions, beliefs and ideas.
2. Understand spiritual life: giving young people vivid examples of spirituality in practice and encouraging them to engage with them using their critical thinking skills.
3. Explore Christian spirituality: giving young people a safe and non-judgemental space to explore spiritual belief and practice from the Christian tradition.

We offer a wide variety of input within the curriculum to schools, including RE theme days, school assemblies, spiritual literacy work within English and contributing to RE and PHSE. We also develop wider school projects using art within school buildings to provide opportunities for students to reflect and explore spiritual themes.

### **3. A national perspective**

Out of the success of our local work, LCET developed a national project for Christian schools work: [schoolswork.co.uk](http://schoolswork.co.uk) launched in November 2007 and aims to resource, connect and inspire Christians visiting and working in a school. The website has already attracted nearly 100,000 unique users and gives us a chance to both share what we're doing and learn from others' experience. The Chaplaincy Director will be able to benefit from the link with this national project, contributing content and helping develop training events and material to share more widely.

### **4. About LCET**

LCET is a charity started by local churches in Luton in 1993. Over the 16 years of its work, three complementary teams have developed: one providing therapeutic care for young people with emotional and personal needs, another working with young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) and the third seeking to promote spiritual development in young people through placing chaplains in local secondary schools. These three teams work closely together on a range of other larger projects and each is led by a senior manager. LCET now works in all of the town's secondary schools as well as the other specialist educational establishments.

### **5. The LCET team**

There are currently sixteen salaried staff together with over twenty volunteer staff. The whole team meets together weekly. In addition each department will have regular meetings and a programme of supervision and management for individual staff. Six times a year the team holds a three day retreat at a nearby Benedictine monastery, giving space to reflect and develop as a community.

### **6. Management structure**

Each team or department has a Director, managing its work. Together with the Finance Director and the LCET Chief Executive and Deputy, they make up the senior management team who are, in turn, responsible to a Board of Trustees. The Trust also has a number of Patrons. The senior management team meets fortnightly and the Board of Trustees meets five times each year.

### **7. Training**

LCET will provide training appropriate to the experience of the appointed staff member. A skills audit will be developed in the first few weeks which will enable a comprehensive training plan to be put together. This may include mentoring from LCET staff, internal training or external courses.

LCET also provide opportunities for staff to pursue further education qualifications and provide course fees and study time to facilitate this. To date five staff have successfully completed a master postgraduate degree qualification in a related field with a variety of universities and colleges.

### **8. Salary structure**

LCET's salary structure takes account of previous relevant experience and qualifications and also provides annual incremental increases for length of service and inflation. Additional increases are given for management or other senior roles.

### **9. Recruitment**

LCET follows the guidelines laid out by the Luton Safeguarding Children Board in ensuring safe and appropriate recruitment.