

Southampton Schools Engagement

Biblical Context

Psalms 78

¹ O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. ² I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old- ³ what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. ⁴ We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. ⁵ He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, ⁶ so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. ⁷ Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

Southampton Christian Network Context

Love Southampton is a new initiative, which promotes long-term engagement with the many communities across Southampton. The seven principles of Love Southampton are:

- commitment to prayer
- in covenant together
- in it for the long-term
- comprehensive in scope
- united partners in mission
- progressively auditing what we do
- filled with faith and expectancy

Schools are communities within themselves with campuses of up to 1500 pupils plus their associated families. Schools are central to the life of estates and communities. In many places, they are also the most significant point of community activity.

The scope of this work will include Youthnet, who have been meeting for many years drawing together church youth workers in Southampton.

Work So Far

Southampton Christian Network has surveyed member churches on their engagement with schools and colleges in Southampton. From this, a working document has been formed which shows the level of Christian input into each of the schools and colleges in the city. There is a good variety of input into schools: lessons and assemblies, parent support work,

faith exploration days and weeks, community governors and mentoring. The mapping shows where there are overlaps and gaps in Christian input into schools. Southampton Christian Network has a clear sense now of where support from churches to schools is rich and where it is lacking.

Next Steps

1. Presentation of Mapping Results at Global Day of Prayer.
2. Schools Work Breakfast – opportunity to gather those engaged in schools to pray, present mapping work and to hear from Dan Finn (Yo-Yo Trust, York) on their city's co-ordinated schools work.
3. Update mapping document.
4. Set objectives for this area of work.
5. Form a group that will progressively audit church input in schools.
6. Raise resources for co-ordinating work.

Objectives

The mapping that has been done so far will enable us to give a rating to each school based on whether they have an active Christian link or not. We will represent this by scoring them red, amber or green.

Red:	No Christian input
Amber:	Little or sporadic Christian input
Green:	Regular Christian input

The steering team will agree objectives over the coming ten years related to:

- raising the percentage of schools that are rated green
- raising the level of collaboration for those working in schools: sharing resources and ideas and sharing best practice
- raising the level of prayer and support for school communities and those working in schools and colleges

Progress will be monitored as part of the Love Southampton initiative.

For more information on schools' engagement, please make contact via the Southampton Christian Network website.