



## DBE Guidance for Schools: Prayers of Love and Faith

### Background

You may have heard that ministers within the Church of England will be able to offer prayers of thanksgiving and blessing for same-sex couples (known as Prayers of Love and Faith) as part of regular worship services ([see press release](#)). This has proven to be quite a contentious matter within the Church, and so we would expect that not all ministers in the diocese will choose to offer these prayers publicly, and members of the church communities which you engage with may feel quite differently about this development.

Regardless, however, of what happens with 'Living in Love and Faith' within the Church, the DBE remains firmly committed to our aspiration to be '**scandalously inclusive**'. This will not change.

We are also firmly committed to helping build good church-school relationships, and it is our hope and prayer that any developments related to Living in Love and Faith will not impede these. However, if you have any concerns about what this looks like in your context, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### What do Prayers of Love and Faith mean for church-school relationships?

Leicester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) is committed to support schools prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying within schools. The LDBE has a vision for its schools to be 'scandalously inclusive', providing a welcoming and safe space for all children, where they can develop healthy self-esteem, and are prepared for life in modern Britain such that they are not afraid of difference and can engage critically with a breadth of viewpoints in a way that demonstrates respect for the individuals who hold them.

The diocese and its Board of Education are also firmly committed to supporting meaningful, reciprocal relationships between churches and schools. Such relationships are built on mutual trust and understanding, which should include understanding and respecting the different contexts of school and parish and the particular legal responsibilities which schools exercise towards the children and young people, staff and other stakeholders.

Within a school's locality there will be churches and clergy holding a breadth of views on many issues, including whether they wish to offer Prayers of Love and Faith. School leaders should recognise the validity of these different positions within the Church of England. We encourage clergy and lay ministers involved in ministry within a school context to speak with the headteacher and school governors about their position with regards to Living in Love and Faith and explore together how, if they are not supportive of same-sex relationships or gender transitions, they can minister in line with their convictions while honouring the 2010 Equality Act under which the school operates.



When discussing differences that exist within the Church, careful use of language such as “some Christians believe”, “other Christians believe” is more helpful to holding a range of views together than absolute language. Clergy and lay ministers should be also mindful that there may be a range of family groupings and relationships represented within the school community who should not be made to feel alienated, different or wrong.

If you need advice about relating to a local school, either as a governor or someone who leads Collective Worship, with regards to Living in Love and Faith, please contact the Diocesan Director of Education, Carolyn Shoyer [carolyn.shoyer@leicesterdbbe.org](mailto:carolyn.shoyer@leicesterdbbe.org)