



Diocese of Portsmouth

# Pompey Churches

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## 'Ewe Matter' project aims to help C of E schools discuss the Bible

# A sheep like this is coming to your school!



Clockwise from left: Ryan Ashton, 6, Charlotte Oakley, 7, Amy Diment, 6, Heath Broomfield, 6, and Olivia Kent, 6, from St Alban's C of E Primary

### A FLOCK of sheep will soon arrive in our church schools – to help us to teach children about the Bible.

A new project, entitled 'Ewe Matter', will involve a white fibreglass sheep being sent to each C of E school in Winchester and Portsmouth dioceses that signs up for the project.

Children will be encouraged to decorate the sheep, which will then be used in collective worship and lessons to reflect on Bible stories such as the Lost Sheep and the Nativity – and as part of the wider curriculum.

Parishes will be encouraged to use the sheep to forge closer links with their local schools, sending worshippers in to lead assemblies, read with pupils and help in the

classroom. Individuals can also use their own gifts and skills to use the sheep in creative ways.

And next July, those schools will bring their sheep to Portsmouth and Winchester Cathedrals for special Leavers' Services that will have a sheep theme. The colourful flocks will be reunited inside both ancient buildings during services led by diocesan and suffragan bishops.

So far 50 C of E schools in both dioceses have signed up to the project – 11 of those schools are within our diocese. Their sheep have been ordered and are likely to start arriving in January.

The man behind the project is our diocesan director of education Jeff Williams. He has already asked the volunteers who make up our associate education team to create sheep-related resources

that can be used in the classroom.

He said: "This kind of thing has worked very well in other parts of the country. Marwell Zoo scattered zebras around Southampton, which were decorated and then all came together for a parade. In Bristol, it was Wallace and Gromits. When the Paddington film was launched, there was a chance to decorate Paddington sculptures all over London.

"I mentioned the idea to our church school headteachers and they were very keen. It's a way of helping to strengthen the links between dioceses, parishes and church schools, as we encourage churchgoers to go into school and use these sheep.

"Having something visual and fun is also a good way to help children to learn in all sorts of

ways. They will love decorating each sheep in a style that says something about their own school.

"And ultimately they will be able to keep the sheep after our Leavers' Services, as a permanent resource, which can be used in other parts of the curriculum."

Laura Bosworth, executive head of Oakfield C of E Primary in Ryde, and St George's C of E Primary in Arreton, said: "Because we are a federation of two schools, we hope this can be a joint project between the two schools. We will have two sheep, and both schools will decorate half of each sheep.

"We hope that helps us to think about what makes us unique as a community, and how we are part of a wider community. It's a practical, concrete task that allows us to have a conversation

about our identity."

Among the resources that will be available to our schools are lists of references to sheep throughout the Bible, ideas to decorate their fibreglass sheep, ideas for collective worship based around sheep, and a science task to build a sheep using Lego or cardboard. Sheep can also be used as the starting point for pupils to write creative stories or poems of their own, or even to think about cooking ideas.

You can read more about the project, and sign up your parish or school to be involved on [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ewematter](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ewematter).

Your parish can also join in the fun by buying their own sheep. Contact Julie Stirling on [julie.stirling@portsmouth.anglican.org](mailto:julie.stirling@portsmouth.anglican.org) for details.