**Lancashire's 'All Together Now' Schools Linking Project 2024-2025**

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to you to invite you to join the Lancashire 'All Together Now' Schools Linking Programme for the 2024-2025 academic year. The Equality and Diversity Team of Lancashire County Council has successfully facilitated this project since 2017. In the current academic year this has included **51** primary classes from **36** schools, making **24** class links.

Schools Linking connects a class (or classes) of pupils in your school with those from another school, creating a year-long curriculum-rich link between schools across the county, building a sense of togetherness and confidence in contact with others. The programme is fully resourced, and the link teachers plan their linking year together, supporting pupils to explore identity, celebrate diversity, promote community, and champion equality.

Head teachers across the country have told us that they take part in Linking because it broadens their pupils' horizons and experiences, allows them to explore identity and difference and develop SMSC, provides a meaningful and enjoyable context for communication, and is an excellent programme for staff's professional development.

**How does the Programme work?**

* Schools Linking this year will start with preparation for linking through identity work in class, exchanged in the autumn term 2024, and pairs of schools can plan to meet face to face in the spring/summer term.
* The Programme is particularly aimed at Key Stage 2 and classes are matched by year group; however, if you would like to link another Key Stage (your Year 2, for example), please get in touch. Most schools link all the classes in their chosen year group.
* Teacher CPD sessions are provided twice a year for pairs of linking teachers, to receive training, learn about the comprehensive tried and tested resources for running the programme and to plan with their link partner. The face-to-face training sessions will be in Burnley, and comprise one full-day session on **24th September 2024** and the morning of **14th January 2025**, and include opportunities for the teachers to plan together.
* Phase 1 of the programme in the autumn term can involve 6 resourced lessons exploring the questions *Who am I? Who are we?* with exchanges of work about identity and diversity as well as structured video calls between classes.
* Phase 2 in the spring/summer term explores the questions, *Where do we live?* and *How do we all live together?* with 3 resourced lessons, exploring shared values and social action, as well as structured video calls between classes.
* During Phase 2, classes typically meet up at a Neutral Venue. These need to be arranged directly with the venue and we continue to provide links to popular facilitators for these activities.
* Later, classes can meet up with each other again, as each school hosts a class visit. All the materials you need to plan and run a class visit are on The Linking Network's website.
* Phase 3 in the summer term offers resources to reflect and say goodbye.
* Resources include games, online theatre, drama, storytelling, poetry, Sign Supported English (SSE) and classroom PowerPoints, lesson plans and handouts. Please explore these [examples](https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/resources-2/primary-school-resources/primary-schools-linking/primary-school-linking-phase-1/).
* Activities to engage your families in the programme are provided. Each link teacher can choose how much or how little they would like to do as part of home/school connections.
* Schools Linking is supported by [The Linking Network](https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/) and backed by the DfE, DLUHC, Pears Foundation and the Dulverton Trust. It is rooted in research into what works in reducing prejudice in children and young people and has been running since 2001. Here is a [short video](https://vimeo.com/563775324) of facilitators around the country, talking about the impact of Schools Linking. In 2023-24 over 24,000 children, in 26 local authority areas, have taken part in the programme, with headteachers choosing to build Schools Linking into their curriculum offer.

If you are interested in joining the programme, please complete the Expression of Interest form below and return to us as soon as possible. Upon receipt of this, we will contact you to discuss your school priorities, your preferred year group and the number of classes for linking. We will then try to find you a suitable link school. If you already have a school you connect with and would both like to take part in the Linking Project together, please write this on the Expression of Interest form.

To join the project this year there is a fee of £100, payable upon having your link partner confirmed. Schools also pay any transport costs to visit one another’s schools.

If you would like a further conversation about the project, please do get in touch.

Kind regards,

James Orme

Equality & Diversity Team Lancashire County Council 01772 538416

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**Twitter**: [@Linking\_Network](https://twitter.com/Linking_Network) #schoolslinking [@EqualLancs](https://twitter.com/EqualLancs)

**Facebook**: Schools Linking closed teachers’ group. Search Schools Linking, click and request to join.

**Linking news**: <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/news/>

**Website:** <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk>

**Expression of Interest Form**

# Lancashire 'All Together Now' Schools Linking Programme 2024-25

Name of School:

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| --- |
| Telephone and Email: |
| Headteacher name: |
| Any comments on Year group you would prefer to link, number of classes (in each year group), the kind of school you would like to link with, etc. [*References to year groups will be understood as 2024-25 classes; if you are renewing an existing link with the same children, please keep this in mind!*] |

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| --- | --- |
| (1) "*Being geographically close to our link is more important than matching our other preferences.*" | *Yes / No* |
| (2) "*An exact year group match is not essential for us (e.g. we would link our Y4 with a Y3 or Y5 class from another school).*" | *Yes / No* |
| (3) (If "**No**" to (2) above): "*We would be willing to link an alternative year group from our school."* (Please list these): |  |

*This is an expression of interest form for joining the project. Please note: we cannot guarantee that we will find a link for all schools who express an interest. Any schools for whom we are unable to find a link will be given priority for the following year's project.*

*Once you are linked with a school, you agree to engage throughout the year with your link school; to pay £100 for involvement in the project and for any transport costs; to ensure your link works within your school’s safeguarding policies and that your linked teachers attend the 2 face-to-face CPD sessions in Burnley (on 24/9/24 and 14/1/25) for training about the programme, to access adaptable resources to run the link and to plan with their link teacher. There is no further charge for the training. We will provide ongoing support and guidance to your teachers.*

Signed: Date:

**Please reply via email at your earliest convenience to:** **james.orme@lancashire.gov.uk**