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**Scripture**  
union

Christians and Sheffield Schools  
connecting ● encouraging ● resourcing

# Christians and Sheffield Schools (CaSS)

## Annual Report

### Sept 2014-Sept 2015

CaSS is the work of the Sheffield Schools Christian Worker Trust

(Registered charity 1007305)

## Link Adviser's Report



**“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world.”**

### **(The Message) Matthew 5:14**

Christians & Sheffield Schools was established in 1985 and so is thirty years in 2015! Schools, teachers, pupils and the education system have all encountered massive changes during that period and the work of CaSS has also needed to transform and alter. However, throughout that time it has been CaSS’ vision to serve and bring the ‘God-colours’ to the lives of those who work and learn in the schools of the city. We believe our unique contribution to encouraging and resourcing Christians to serve Sheffield schools is needed just as much, maybe even more, than ever.

You will know that the stress teachers are under has received press attention recently. It is reported that 4000 teachers leave the profession each month and that an estimated two fifths of new teachers leave the profession within five years (Sir Michael Wilshaw). Among almost 900 teachers embarking on their classroom careers who were questioned by the ATL teaching union, 73 per cent admitted having thought about quitting. The NAS/UWT report that 68% of its members are ‘seriously considering’ leaving the profession entirely. Rapid and frequent changes in the curriculum, the pressures of Ofsted, a results driven environment with targets, tests, tick boxes and paper work all contribute to this stress and many teachers are working very long hours.

Young people, the so called Generation Z, are also facing many pressures, as indicated by the rise in the use of food banks, poverty, exam pressures, self-harming, family breakdown, eating disorders, depression, bullying via social media, abuse, alcohol/drug misuse and the rising use of pornography. Schools really need us all to prayer for them, to offer them encouragement and to work to serve them.

So 2014-15 was another busy year for CaSS, with several new opportunities to encourage and resource Christians to serve schools and to try and ensure that there are people to support and serve children and young people.

Here are a few highlights of the year September 2014 – August 2015

## Staffing

CaSS is very grateful to Abi Wood for working on a temporary basis to help improve the CaSS database.

We are delighted that Emily Clark joined CaSS as an administrator for six hours a week from September 2015. Emily's appointment is as a result of a generous donation for this specific purpose. Emily can be contacted on [admin@cass-su.org.uk](mailto:admin@cass-su.org.uk)



Tim Elgar of e:merge ([www.e:mergeonline.org.uk](http://www.e:mergeonline.org.uk)) has shared the CaSS office for the past year and will continue to do so. E:merge is a charity that works in deprived areas to inspiring young people to transform their lives and communities at home, in school and on the streets.

## Open the Book training

CaSS is encouraged that as a direct result of CaSS' Open the Book training, groups are now visiting 17 Sheffield Primary Schools in areas such as Mosborough, Oughtibridge, Ecclesall, Porter Croft, Beauchief/Woodseats, Hallam, Crosspool etc. However, it is our prayer that we will see more Open the Book groups starting across the city.

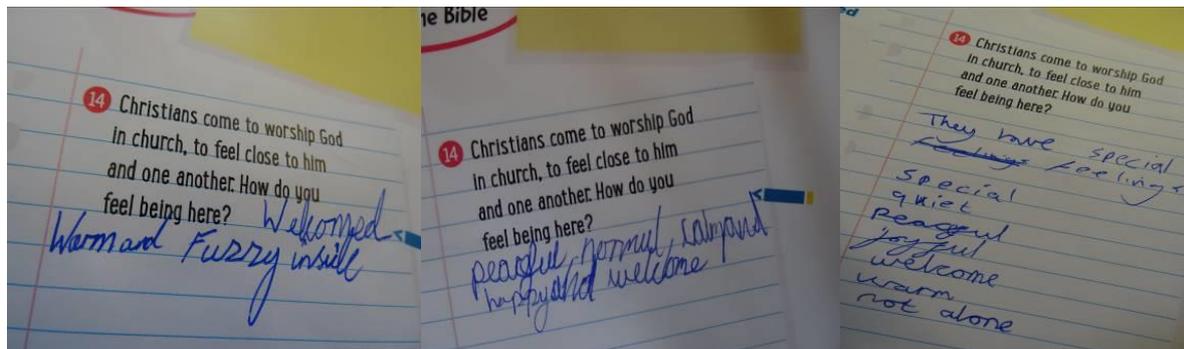
Emily has been busy making Open the Book costumes for CaSS training sessions. If you would like to find out more about Open the Book go to [www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book](http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book) or book a CaSS 2 hour no-obligation great fun training session! Contact [fiona.walton@cass-su.org.uk](mailto:fiona.walton@cass-su.org.uk)



## CaSS publications

CaSS' lesson ideas about the John's Gospels given out to troops during World War I, were distributed nationally to schools via the SGM Lifewords website. [www.sgmlifewords.com](http://www.sgmlifewords.com)

CaSS piloted the new SU booklet, 'It's Your Church' for use by Key Stage 2 pupils visiting churches. The booklet has now been published and is available from Scripture Union.



## CaSS Conference

CaSS put a lot of work into planning a conference for 2015, with 15 wonderful speakers booked and a marketplace full of stalls, but bookings were slow and the decision was taken to cancel it for 2015. Planning is already advanced for the 2016 conference which will be run in partnership with Sheffield Diocese, Sheffield Methodist District and Sheffield YMCA. The 'Joined Up' conference for those serving children, youth and schools will be held on **Saturday 12 March at Saint Mary's, Bramall Lane**. Please keep the date free!

## Training for CaSS

CaSS visited an SU Lifepath event on John Wesley in Preston and thanks Rob Steward for sharing his ideas and resources. We will be developing a Sheffield version.

CaSS attended a Prayer Spaces development day in York, a school's work training Day in Sheffield, an SU training event at Hinsley Hall in Leeds, the Christian Resources Exhibition in Manchester and a Godly Play training Day for teachers in Sheffield.

## Events

CaSS was invited to talk to 30+ Diocesan head teachers about Open the Book, Prayer Spaces in Schools and Godly Play. This led to some subsidised teacher training in Godly Play and Spiritual Development led by Kathryn Lord, which CaSS attended.

We supported SU's 3D event at Wesley Hall and were part of a multi-agency working party looking at how to support Christian teachers and pupils more effectively.



CaSS took a two-foot statue of Sheffield Christian hero James Montgomery round his favourite haunts - the resulting photographs were used in a twitter campaign and in The Star newspaper to advertise an 'Off the Shelf' James Montgomery Day at the Cathedral. 850 visitors passed through the cathedral and CaSS had some very good conversations.



At the 'Pray Day for Sheffield Schools' event John O'Brien gave a very encouraging message and a large group of people prayed using the school-themed prayer stations.

In December 2014 the CaSS Christmas Tree was decorated on the theme of The Christmas Truce and on display at the Millhouses Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival. Over 20 trees were visited by 8 schools and each child was offered a Christmas comic, supplied by SU, via CaSS.

CaSS distributed 3000 free SU Christmas Story comics in 2014 and is aiming to give out 5000 to schools, foodbanks etc. during Christmas 2015.



CaSS invited Phil Togwell of Prayer Spaces in Schools ([www.prayerspacesinschools.com](http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com)) to speak in Sheffield in February and CaSS was very grateful to The Oakes and The Montgomery for acting as hosts. Prayer Spaces are a fantastic way to serve a school, offering schools space and time out to reflect and to pray. A variety of people from across the city attended the events – parents, grandparents, youth workers, head teachers, clergy, teachers, a school chaplain, Rotherham RE team etc. They heard Phil’s inspiring and motivating talk, which was sprinkled with wonderful examples of school’s (both pupils and staff) reactions to Prayer Spaces.

Results of the CaSS Prayer Spaces evening include Phil going to talk to Rotherham RE team, with whom CaSS are forging closer links, and there were Prayer Spaces at The Oakes ‘Mother and Daughter’ weekend and at various Y6 school transition events.

## REsources

CaSS was awarded a grant from Keswick Hall Trust to develop RE resource boxes to loan to schools. Two (Primary & Secondary) ‘Bereavement Boxes’ of books, stories and advice have been created for loan to schools suffering bereavement or wanting to explore bereavement.



RE lessons on e.g. Joseph, 4 sessions on Moses (Women, Courage, Holiness, 10 Commandments) David & Goliath, The Good Samaritan and Easter have been developed and will appear on the CaSS website for download shortly. Other lessons on Remembrance, Christmas Truce, Slavery and the Parable of the Lost Son are being developed. RE boxes for loan include El Salvadorean Crosses, (a mixture of other) Christian crosses, a book box on Mother Teresa and a Prayer Box – all available for loan, with lesson ideas.



## Ongoing

CaSS continues to hold monthly prayer meetings for Sheffield Schools and to produce termly prayer guides and newsletters. Often we are to be found connecting, encouraging and resourcing individuals and groups.

We help serve after school Tea & Toast to 60 – 100 teenagers every week in Crosspool for the third year.



We are continuing to tackle the database and update and improve information on our website. We have a lovely roll up banner, for which we are very grateful to Dan Harris former Youth Worker at St Thomas, Crookes and now in Ecuador with Latin Links. CaSS is now on Facebook and Twitter @ChristiansSheff. We aim to improve our communication still further in the course of 2016.

CaSS continues to be very grateful for the prayers and financial gifts of its supporters. Thank you.

Fiona Walton (Links Adviser)



PLEASE NOTE – This report applies to the time period September 2014 – September 2015, an academic year. This is a change to last year's report which covered a longer period. This means there is some overlap in reporting between this year and last year to effect this change. Future reports will apply to an academic year.

## Management Group Report

The Management Group has continued to meet regularly to provide oversight and governance to the work of CaSS. Our commitment remains to value schools and all those who work and learn in them throughout Sheffield. We do this in partnership with churches from different denominations and across the whole of the City.

Initiatives in 2014-15 have included:

- Training events held in partnership with PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS and SCRIPTURE UNION/URBAN SAINTS.
- The ongoing programme of Open the Book training and support in various parts of the city.
- The distribution of 3,000 comics to Key Stage 1 or 2 children, as part of Christmas Unwrapped.
- The writing of RE resources and RE boxes to loan to schools

CaSS is grateful to the Keswick Hall Trust for a grant to provide resources to support RE teaching and Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Development (such as grief and bereavement resources) in Sheffield schools. More details of a launch event for this important resource for the city will follow in the Spring Term 2016.

A key priority for Cass in the next 12 months is to improve the ways we communicate with and value our supporters and the churches that work with us in order to encourage informed prayer and regular giving so that the work remains sustainable in the medium term. CaSS is always happy to welcome new partners, and to send out copies of our informative termly newsletter and prayer diary to supporters.

I would like to express my thanks to the continuing officers and trustees of CaSS for their hard work. Whilst much of the trustee's role is mundane (for example, working through the legal obligations of pension auto-enrolment) it is a valued role that enables the 'connecting, encouraging and resourcing' to go smoothly. In particular I would like to thank Ann Bielby who is standing down as trustee after 4 years of service. Ann's calm and informed contribution to the governance of CaSS has been much appreciated.

Please get in touch if you would like advice on any school-related issue as a church leader, children's worker, teacher or parent. The trustees of CaSS are happy to provide a short talk/Powerpoint and display-table on its work as part of Sunday services in churches. If you would like to support the work of CaSS through joining a prayer group, volunteering to work with schools, serving as a trustee or giving to the work of CaSS please do get in touch. Contact details are on the last page of this report.

Martyn Edwards

Chair of Management Group.

### **CaSS aims to connect**

- Christians with Sheffield schools so that they can work together to serve their communities;
- Christians working in schools with one another;
- Christian activity happening in Sheffield schools by building up an overview of it.

### **CaSS aims to encourage**

- Christians to pray for and serve their local schools;
- Churches to support members of their congregations who work or study in schools.

### **CaSS aims to resource**

- Christians working in or serving Sheffield schools in a wide variety of ways.

## Treasurer's Report

The charity has produced a deficit for the year ended 31st August 2015. The trustees are aware that this position is not sustainable and are reviewing future options for CaSS. We have seen a welcome increase in the number of supporters this year. Full audited accounts are available upon request.

	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Income	£15,502	£13,395	£23,828
Expenditure	£16,100	£17,708	£17,518
Surplus	£(600)	£(4,315)	£6,310
Reserves	£6,256	£6,856	£11,173

We received donations from approximately 30 (27 in 2013/14) individuals, 13 (8) churches and 2 (1) trusts. Many individuals give under gift aid which brings in a welcome sum from HM Revenue and Customs. The trustees are grateful to all who support the ministry.

About 80% of all expenditure is on salaries and associated costs such as National Insurance. We paid £455 (£510) to Scripture Union for their support and training facilities. Our reserves are held on deposit at our bank where we have rapid access for our day to day needs. The trustees are looking to investigate into other areas to support the organisation so it can be sustainable in the future. We are grateful for God's faithfulness in providing the resources needed for this ministry, and trust in Him for our future provision through the generosity of our supporters.

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Treasurer

## Links Adviser - Fiona Walton



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Emily Clark – CaSS Administrator: [admin@cass-su.org.uk](mailto:admin@cass-su.org.uk)

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ChristiansSheffieldSchoolsCass](http://www.facebook.com/ChristiansSheffieldSchoolsCass)

### Management Group

Richard Donkin (trustee)	All Saints Ecclesall Parish Church
Di Durie (trustee)	Christ Church Fulwood
Martyn Edwards (trustee)	Meadowhead Christian Fellowship
Efe Eruero	Cemetery Road Baptist Church
Glenn Evans (trustee)	Bents Green Methodist Church
Rachel McCallum (trustee)	Methodist Yorkshire-Plus Learning and Development Officer

**Further copies of the annual report may be obtained from the CaSS office.**