



has increased more than three-fold.

Hope Church, in Hounslow, west London, registered 110 children for its academy in the last year compared to 30 before the pandemic. Its football sessions are run in partnership with [KICK](#), the Christian sports charity for young people.

FA qualified coaches and volunteer chaplains from Hope Church and local churches oversee the Sunday afternoon football training and regular matches for children aged between seven and 18.

Six boys' teams and two girls' teams take part in a short session set aside for discussion on values in the context of Christian faith, in between their football training and matches.

Chris Kettel, youth lead for the church, said the sports ministry had led to greater contact between the community and the church with families coming to holiday clubs and other events and services at the church.

He said 'We are passionate about this work and excited about where it could lead to. There has been a huge growth in the number of children coming to the Academy and now we are starting to think about pioneering a league initiative which can reach out to other youth groups, football clubs and other Kick Academies across south and west London.'

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