

## **Live Life, Love Learning Guided by God**

### **Live Life:**

We see each day as being a wonderful gift  
to be enjoyed and embraced.

### **Love Learning:**

We seek to inspire in each child a love of learning  
so that they can grow in confidence and start to  
discover and develop their own special skills.

### **Guided by God:**

We believe every child is valued and special to God.  
As a Christian school community we encourage our children  
to grow in self-respect and respect for others.  
We seek to build a community where everyone is valued.

Most importantly of all it is to be seen in the everyday life of the school. Lived out in the relationships that are formed, the conversations that happen, the activities that take place and in the choices that the children and staff make. Values are things we believe in that help us make decisions about how we behave. They are the principles that guide our lives. As a school we have chosen five core Christian values that we believe are important to enable all of the children to flourish and become the best that they can be:

**Respect      Honesty      Thankfulness      Kindness      Forgiveness.**

### **Why 'Christian Values' rather than simply 'Values'?**

Any school can come up with a list of values, so why do we define ours as being Christian values? We believe that the values we have identified are some of the values we can clearly see in the life and teachings of Jesus who would have encouraged us to place these values at the centre of our school life. As such, we believe they should be seen running through the whole life of the school like the writing that can be seen running through a stick of rock.

But what about families of different faiths or those who do not believe in God? Whilst we are proud to be a church school, children and staff of all faiths and non are welcome at our school and our aims are to promote understanding and respect between those of different faith traditions.

### **A Daily Reality**

The challenge for our school community is to make our ethos statement and Christian values a daily reality for the school and the children. So what do each of our values mean in real terms for our school.

#### **Respect**

*Treating others and yourself positively*

The Bible tells us that no matter whether we are young or old, short or tall, male or female, born in England or in another country we are all made in the image of God. That does not mean that we literally

look like God but that we are all special. At St Mary's school we see this in action by encouraging the children to have a **high regard for others and a proper respect for themselves**. In practice having a high regard for others means accepting that other people are different but just as important as each other. Other words for this might be **equality, inclusion and tolerance**.

Encouraging our children to have a proper respect for themselves does not mean being big headed but rather helping them to have the confidence to stand up for themselves so that they are not talked into doing things that they know are wrong or make them feel uncomfortable.

Respect also includes the practising of good manners by saying 'please' and 'thank you'; looking after school equipment and other children's items; and taking care of the environment and wildlife by not dropping rubbish.

### **Honesty**

*Trustworthy and true*

As a school we encourage each other to recognise the importance of being **trustworthy and truthful** in our friendships, our relationship with God, our school and our community. We need to be able to trust others when we are working together as a team. Trust is something that has to be earned and is sadly easily damaged when we do not tell the truth, fail keep the promises we have made or cannot be trusted to complete the tasks we've been asked to do.

### **Thankfulness**

*Being happy and grateful*

We have a lot to be thankful for. Our aim is for St Mary's school to be a **happy, positive and joyful place** to be. A place where life is seen as a gift from God; each school day as an opportunity to learn and enjoy; and where achievement is worthy of celebration. We see this in action when the children are polite and remember to say thank you- especially for those things or people that get taken for granted; when the children help to set a positive atmosphere and make the happiness of others a priority; when they celebrate their own and other children's achievements; and when they enjoy time spent with friends.

### **Kindness**

*Helping others in need*

A core Christian value is love. In our school each member is encouraged to **care for each other**. To show kindness and compassion through what they say and do. To recognise when others need us to listen and act with kindness like that which we see in Jesus' story of the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10: 25-37.

### **Forgiveness**

*Forgiving and being forgiven*

In the Lord's Prayer we ask God to forgive us our sins as "we forgive those who sin against us." (*Sin = the things we have done that we know we shouldn't have done and the things we haven't done that we know we should have*). Jesus didn't just teach forgiveness he practised it. He prayed to God his Father that his persecutors would be forgiven as he hung upon the cross.

Bearing a grudge or seeking revenge are never appropriate responses to a wrong that has been committed. Bearing a grudge simply makes us feel more angry and seeking revenge only makes problems worse.

At St Mary's school we see forgiveness in practice when our children are **honest and have the courage to say sorry** when they have done something wrong; when they are **willing to forgive** when someone else says sorry to them; are willing to give each other a second chance; when we recognise that nobody is perfect and when we are willing to make amends and remake broken friendships.

### **And finally – Other Christian Values**

There are of course lots of other Christian values that we could have chosen such as reverence, compassion, fairness, generosity, humility, hopefulness and peace to mention just a few. Whilst all of these different values are important and none forgotten the five values we have chosen to concentrate upon are the ones that we believe are the most important for our school at the moment. You might like to take a little time to consider what are the most important values for you and your family?

As a school we explore each of these values in more detail with the children through our school assemblies and Religious Education lessons amongst other things.

It's not just our children who need to learn about values, adults have to think about them too and we sometimes need to remind ourselves to slow down and think about what is really important to us. All adults at St Mary's try to live the values at the same time as the children: that way we can all learn together.

Think about how you can put these Christian values into action so that they become woven into the very fabric of both home and school life.