

# **St Mary's CE Primary School Chessington**

## **Our Foundation, Ethos and Theologically Rooted Christian Vision**

### **1. Our Foundation**

St Mary's is a Church of England school that was founded in 1870 by the Reverend William Stapylton, who served as Vicar of St John's Malden with Chessington from 1850 to 1894. Our Trust Deed (the document that stipulates the principles and legal conditions under which the school was established and should be run) states that the school was founded:

*"for the education of children and adults of the labouring agricultural manufacturing and other poorer classes in the Parish or Chapelry of Chessington",*

*shall "always be in union with and of the Incorporated National Society for the promotion of education of the Poor in the Principles of Established Church throughout England and Wales"*

and that the Vicar of Chessington shall have a significant role in the direction of pupils' *'moral and religious instruction'*.

### **2. Our Ethos**

Building on the founding vision of our school, the Ethos statement in our Instrument of Government (2015) further strengthens our identity as a Church School and underpins our vision:

*'Recognising its historical foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.'*

*The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.'*

School leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that this ethos permeates our provision in all areas and is demonstrated in the way the school teaches our pupils and how we interact with each other in the school community.

### **3. Our Inspirational Biblical Text**

Building on the founding vision of our school as expressed in our Trust Deed, and the

Ethos Statement in our Instrument of Governance, and taking account of our unique school context, we have chosen the following Biblical text to underpin and strengthen our vision:

*Jesus said, “What can we say God’s kingdom is like? What story can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. But when you plant the seed, it grows. It becomes the largest of all garden plants. Its branches are so big that birds can rest in its shade.” Mark 4:30-32*

The story of the mustard seed is one of the most profound and memorable teachings of Jesus Christ. It uses the imagery of a tiny mustard seed growing into a large plant to illustrate the nature and growth of God’s kingdom, his just and gentle rule over the whole of creation.

This simple yet insightful story provides a link with the historic roots of our school which was founded for the children and adults of labouring and agricultural families in what was then a rural, farming community.

#### **4. The Theological Roots of our Vision**

##### **i) God’s Kingdom Starts with Small Beginnings but Grows into Something Significant and Life-Changing**

**Theological Meaning:** The mustard seed is tiny – one of the smallest of all seeds. In Jesus’ day, many people overlooked and disregarded mustard seeds. Yet when planted, this tiny seed sprouts and grows into one of the largest garden plants, big enough for birds to perch in its branches.

**Educational Application:** With our caring, nurturing Christian ethos firmly rooted in all we do, each individual who joins our school community whether child or adult, like the small mustard seed, is tended to so they grow over their time here and flourish in its broadest sense; academically, mentally, socially, morally, physically and spiritually.

We believe that God can use small beginnings for great purposes and this shapes our expectation and the ambition we hold for all.

##### **ii) God’s Kingdom Grows Over Time**

**Theological Meaning:** The parable of the mustard seed depicts a living process of growth. The seed is planted, then it sprouts, grows roots and leaves, matures, flowers, and produces more seeds. Though the mustard seed contains everything needed to grow into a large plant, it does not sprout and mature instantly. It requires time, water, sunlight and nutrients to fulfil its genetic potential. Growth is a gradual process which

requires patience and the willingness to persevere. It may not always be visible immediately, but over time, its impact becomes undeniable.

**Educational Application:** What starts small can blossom into something wonderful, expansive and strong. Like the mustard seed, we aspire to enable all individuals to grow deep, firm roots **that** become strong foundations on which to grow, flourish and thrive.

We recognise the importance of being patient and persevering, as individuals develop on their unique journey over time and at their own pace. We know that pupils and adults need the right environment in which to grow. There are certain things that all humans need: water, good soil and sunlight. We believe that individuals may also need something specific to them and different **from** the next person, in order to reach their own individual potential so that they can live life in all its **fullness**.

This is reflected in our curriculum provision, which is tailored and adapted to meet the needs of all, and in the time we invest to build positive, nurturing relationships. Just like one tiny seed, each individual carries a world of potential and deserves the opportunity to be nurtured with the things they need in order to grow.

### **iii) God's Kingdom is Inclusive**

**Theological Meaning:** One of the amazing things about the mustard plant is that its branches provide shelter and nesting places for birds of all different sizes and species. No bird is excluded from resting in its shade. God's kingdom is open to people of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, classes, and backgrounds.

**Educational Application:** Just as many kinds of birds lodge in the mustard tree's branches, our school is a place where everyone is welcome and everyone can belong. We aspire to learn about, respect and celebrate our differences and unite in our diversity. In our community, individuals of all faiths and worldviews are valued, respected and cared for equally. We have ambition to see all thrive, no matter an individual's starting point or ability.

### **iv) God's Kingdom Brings Benefits**

**Theological Meaning:** At first, the life and death of Jesus Christ did not catch people's attention any more than a mustard seed would lying on the ground. What seemed inconsequential initially, grew into an unstoppable movement of worldwide influence, such that everyone associated with it would find a benefit - pictured as the birds perched on the branches of the mature mustard plant.

**Educational Application:** We want our community to have a positive impact on as many people as possible. Our aspiration is that our branch-like arms will shelter and

give encouragement to all those in our care, so that children and adults grow and develop compassion and a willingness to care for those in need.

We believe that the rich foundations built whilst at St Mary's will convey themselves in the children's motivations, attitudes, behaviours and character. These ingrained qualities will benefit all those with whom they connect in their future, enabling them to be respectful citizens who make valuable contributions to the communities.

## 5. Our Vision

**Our Vision flows from our Ethos, our inspirational Bible text and consists of four parts:**

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive community underpinned by our Christian ethos.	Build a sense of belonging by growing strong, nurturing relationships shaped by Christian values.	Foster a life-long curiosity for learning by providing a high-quality curriculum that is broad, balanced, ambitious and accessible to all.	Enable children and adults to flourish mentally, physically, spiritually and socially so they fulfil their potential.

Our Vision summarises the ultimate aims we have for our children, while our Christian values serve as a way children and adults can put our vision in action. The curriculum is designed to ensure that we embed our vision and values through what we teach and how we live and work as a community.

**Possible Strapline:** — Growing our Community Together

## 6. VISION and STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

*Jesus said, "What can we say God's kingdom is like? What story can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. But when you plant the seed, it grows. It becomes the largest of all garden plants. Its branches are so big that birds can rest in its shade." Mark 4:30-32*

VISION	Providing a welcoming, safe and inclusive community	Build a sense of belonging by growing strong, nurturing	Foster a life-long curiosity for learning, characterised by	Enable children and adults to flourish mentally,
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	<b>underpinned by our Christian ethos.</b>	<b>relationships shaped by Christian values.</b>	<b>providing a high-quality curriculum that is broad, balanced, ambitious and accessible to all.</b>	<b>physically, spiritually and socially so they fulfil their potential.</b>
<b>Examples of objectives:</b>				
<b>O B J E C T I V E S  T O  A C H I E V E  T H E  V I S I O N</b>	<p>To promote a calm, orderly, safe and stimulating school environment, with forgiveness and reconciliation at its core.</p> <p>To establish a distinctive Christian environment for all, by inviting all stakeholders to embrace our Christian values and that the visual elements of our ethos are befitting of a church school.</p> <p>To develop methods that will secure greater funding to deliver a safe and stimulating physical environment.</p>	<p>To build a sense of belonging in our school; involving stakeholders in building strong pupil, parental and community relationships in which we treat each other with dignity and respect.</p> <p>To work in partnership with St Mary's Church and the Diocese of Guildford, enabling children and adults to explore faith and develop spiritually, particularly through inspiring Collective Worship.</p> <p>To work in partnership with St Mary's Church, exploring ways in which children and adults can support the needs of others locally and globally.</p>	<p>To offer a broad and extended school curriculum which enables children and adults to take ownership of their learning and to develop creativity, so that it becomes a habit they adopt for life.</p> <p>To build expertise in all areas of school life through innovative CPD, and developing practice by working in partnership.</p> <p>To enable all children to achieve their academic potential, including through excellent SEND provision.</p>	<p>To ensure that children and adults cherish themselves and others as unique and made in God's image, while individual achievements, character development and flourishing is celebrated publicly.</p> <p>To develop a strong culture that supports mental health and well-being. , Actively encourage children and adults to maintain good mental health by recognising and valuing their role in promoting their own well-being.</p> <p>To design, adapt and implement curriculum provision that enables children to grow mentally, physically, spiritually and socially, including through the delivery of high-quality RE.</p>

## 7. PUBLICALLY FACING VISION SUMMARY

***‘Growing our Community Together’  
Welcome, Nurture, Grow, Flourish***

### ***Our vision:***

- Provide a **welcoming**, safe and inclusive community underpinned by our Christian ethos.
- Build a sense of belonging by growing strong, **nurturing** relationships shaped by Christian values.
- Foster and **grow** a life-long curiosity and love of learning by providing a high-quality curriculum that is ambitious, broad, balanced and accessible to all.
- Enable children and adults to **flourish** mentally, academically, physically, spiritually and socially so they fulfil their potential.

### ***Theological underpinning of our vision:***

Our vision is rooted in the parable of The Mustard Seed

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## 8. OUR CHRISTIAN VALUES

### **Love (Agape):**

- **Definition:** Love, often described as "agape" in Christian theology, is a selfless and unconditional love that extends to all.
- **Bible Story:** The parable of the Forgiving Father in Luke 15:11-32 in which the Father, representing God, embodies sacrificial and undeserved love for his sons.
- **In School:** This translates to kindness, compassion, and empathy towards one another, fostering a caring and supportive community.
- **Example:** Showing grace and forgiveness to those who make mistakes, offering support to those in need, and celebrating each other's successes.

### **Courage:**

- **Definition:** Courage, in a Christian context, is often linked to faith and the strength to stand up for what is right, even when it's difficult.
- **Bible Story:** David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:12-50 in which David was courageous in facing a difficult situation with faith in God's power and protection, rather than relying on his own strength, and in standing up for what was right.
- **In School:** Encouraging pupils to be brave in their learning, to persevere through challenges, and to speak up against injustice or bullying.
- **Example:** Standing up for a friend who is being picked on, participating in class even when feeling unsure, and being honest even when it's difficult.

### **Community (Koinonia):**

- **Definition:** Koinonia, a Greek word, refers to fellowship, communion, and a deep sense of unity and partnership within a community.

- **Bible Story:** The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 in which the Samaritan embodies loving your neighbour by showing compassion and actively helping someone in need, regardless of social or religious differences, without expecting anything in return, demonstrating selfless love and kindness.
- **In School:** Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and a part of the school family.
- **Example:** Working together on projects, celebrating each other's achievements, and supporting one another in times of difficulty.