

Christian Distinctiveness at Holy Trinity C of E Infant School

Our strong Christian distinctiveness is recognised as providing a unique commitment to nurturing and valuing all God's children in our community. We encourage all to learn about the Christian faith but recognise that becoming a Christian is a personal choice of faith and we are respectful of each other's beliefs.



Our Vision:



I can, you can, together we can grow to be the best that God created us to be.

Love one another as God loves us (John 13:34)

Our vision has evolved over many years building upon the phrases 'I can, you can, together we can', 'be the best we can be' and the commandment 'Love one another, as I have loved you' that have been central to our school. In the summer term 2018, staff, pupils and governors decided that the vision statement above reflected best our aims for everyone and created a visual representation that was meaningful for all.

It also links closely to the Church of England Vision for Education for 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) 'the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people ... a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework' and it's four key elements: Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills, Educating for Hope and Aspiration, Educating for Community and Living Well Together and Educating for Dignity and Respect.

Children are taught about the Christian background to our vision, values and virtues throughout our school day.

Our Values:



All of our values are underpinned by love. They ensure that we achieve our vision to help everyone to fulfil their potential within a Christian and caring environment and have 'life in all its fullness'.

Respect

We aim for all children to respect themselves, others and their communities and to take pride in all that they do.

'Treat people in the same way that you want them to treat you.' Luke 6:31

Kindness

We aim for all children to understand what it means to be kind and show kindness and compassion to others.

'Be kind, compassionate and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ' Ephesians 4:32

Honesty

We aim for all children to understand the importance of honesty, using the language of making good and bad choices.

'Each of you must tell the truth to your neighbour because we are part of each other in the same body.'

Ephesians 4:25

Forgiveness

We aim for all children to understand what it means to forgive and be forgiven.

'If you forgive others their sins your heavenly Father will also forgive you.' Matthew 6:14

Responsibility

We aim for all children to understand and show what it means to be responsible, becoming independent and role models to others by always doing the right things even when no one is looking.

'Whatever you do, do it from the heart for the Lord and not for people' Colossians 3:23

Our Virtues:



Our Rainbow Rules were devised by the children and form the basis of our school's behaviour and reward procedures. They are displayed prominently around the school. Children are taught about how each of our virtues help us live out our values and vision.

Our Spirituality:



At Holy Trinity we develop our spirituality through recognising awe and wonder. We encourage everyone to take time to be still and reflect, to observe the world, the everyday and the extraordinary and be fascinated by the discoveries we make. We want everyone to develop a willingness and an ability to ask and explore 'unanswerable' questions, to explore the meaning of the sacred and to have a sense of something other than ourselves.

Our Collective Worship:



We hold daily acts of Collective Worship, mostly as a whole school but also within our classes. All within school are invited to take time to worship. Our themes for Collective Worship follow our values and link directly to passages from the Bible showing how we can live out God's word in our daily lives. We also reflect on our school's namesake of The Holy Trinity through God the Father's Word in the Bible, the life and teachings of God the Son (represented physically by a cross) and God the Spirit (represented physically by our candle) within us, helping us to live out God's love to all.

Our time begins with our opening prayer that was written by the children which the day's Special Helper from Class 2 or Class 1 is invited to lead:

Dear God, Thank you for this special time together with our friends. Please help us to learn more about you. Amen.

The leader of the Collective Worship lights our candle saying 'God is here' and all respond with 'His Spirit is with us'.

The Bible passage or message is delivered as interactively as possible in order to support understanding, create memories and a desire to reflect on the message given. Thoughts from the day's Special Helpers are recorded in our Collective Worship folder as well as other ideas and reflections noted during our time together.

We finish our time of Collective Worship with time to reflect, prayers led by the children and then our Messy Grace.

Once a week, members from the local churches lead our Collective Worship using the 'Open the Book' scheme to explore the big picture of the Bible and on Fridays our Collective Worship celebrates all the good things that have happened throughout the week.

Our RE:



Our RE is based on the 'Understanding Christianity' resource and the study of the Jewish faith. Understanding Christianity aims to support pupils 'in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.' Key questions are explored through a multidisciplinary approach, including Thinking Skills, Philosophy4Children and What If? Learning, we explore core Bible texts:

Making sense of the text – what does the Bible say to Christians?

Understanding the impact – how does this impact on how Christians live and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world?

Making connections – how do you feel about these ideas and values and how do they link to our own lives and ways of understanding the world?

Other world faith celebrations such as Diwali and Chinese New Year are explored through special themed days at the relevant times of year and are often led by visitors from the relevant faiths. Bi-annually KSI children visit the Nottingham Liberal Synagogue to learn more about worship in the Jewish faith and different churches within the Christian faith in Southwell are also learnt about.

We have whole class RE 'big books' so that each child can record something simple from a lesson to create a whole class contribution and children enjoy re-reading these and sharing them with visitors.

Both RE and Collective Worship make links to Understanding Christianity's 'Big Frieze' by Emma Yarlett which depicts the big picture of the Bible through the following sections: Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and the Kingdom of God.

Prayer and Reflection:



As well as praying within Collective Worship, we pray together at the start of our day with a prayer written by the children, we sing grace to give thanks at the start of lunchtime and the day's Special Helpers are invited to lead prayers at the end of each day in class.

We have special areas identified within each class, the school and the playground for prayer and reflection and a themed prayer box which the children can use in the Peace Garden at playtime but encourage all to recognise that special places or times are not needed to pray, reflect or worship.

Children are encouraged to write prayers for all of our church services and their combined ideas form the prayers read by children within the services.

Our Wellbeing:



Me 😊 😊 😊 My teacher 😊 😊 😊



We want our pupils to experience life 'in all its fullness' and aim to create a nurturing family community for our pupils, staff and parents that enables all to feel safe, valued and that they belong. Every pupil has chance to be 'Special Helper' for the day, lead Show and Tell and as an Infant school, our older pupils are expected to take on responsibilities such as being classroom and playground monitors and contributing ideas for our services as well as leading them. We celebrate achievements weekly in our Celebration Collective Worship and Golden Table as well as inviting parents to celebrate with us at events such as open afternoons.

We help our pupils to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults through exploring what living out our vision, values and virtues means collectively through Circle Time, Collective Worship (particularly through focusing on role models in our Christian history), our behaviour system (which the pupils helped to devise) and Class Dojo points and individually as circumstances arise.

We discuss resilience, through Growth Mindsets and encouraging children to reflect on their learning both independently through self-assessment smiley faces and in response to our marking. We promote emotional literacy and discuss how to keep ourselves healthy on the inside and out using techniques such as 'belly breathing' and Mindfulness. We also discuss how faith helps Christians through disappointments and difficult times.

Pupils are encouraged to develop courageous advocacy and to see themselves as agents of change, making the world we live in a better place for everyone. We have mixed age Play and Learning (PAL) groups and an Eco Council that meet in a similar way to a school council. This year, our PAL groups have been given names of significant Christians in history who made changes to their society because of their faith: William Booth, Catherine Booth, Dr Barnardo, Florence Nightingale and William Tyndale. We are learning about their lives and reflecting on what we can learn from them in Collective Worship.

A benefit of our small school family is knowing the pupils individually. Academically we closely track progress and provide interventions internally and external such as Literacy Volunteers as appropriate. We also strive to support our more vulnerable pupils, through strategies such as therapeutic conversations and nurture groups. We aim to help families fully access the best support for their child, facilitating and supporting external agencies to work within school and offer regular 'drop in' sessions with the school nurse.

As part of their induction, new staff are supported to understand our Holy Trinity family, its Christian distinctiveness and how we encourage spirituality. Wellbeing at work is supported by our Health and Safety Governor (Reverend Andrew Porter) alongside Jemma Hughes, our designated person for Health and Wellbeing.

Celebrating British Values:



We know that we are all special.

We try to help other people.

We treat everyone equally.

We understand right from wrong.

We listen to and respect other people's opinions and values.

We understand the consequences of our actions.

We respect the culture and beliefs of others.

We understand and respect the roles of people who help us.

Our British Values are also rooted in the Bible verse 'Love one another as God loves us' (John 13:34) and discussed with the children referencing the verse 'Treat people in the same way that you want them to treat you.' (Luke 6:31) We had a 'Celebrating British Values' day to launch them in school and since then they are discussed in Circle Times, Collective Worship and through our curriculum as relevant.

Our Church:



We have close links with Holy Trinity Church. We are lucky to be able to use this fantastic space for Collective Worship, Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services as well as our PE lessons!

We enjoy joining in with craft at 'Signpost' on a monthly basis as well as joining them for Collective Worship and leading them in worship regularly. Class 1 also enjoy regularly lead the singing sessions at 'Trinity Toddlers'. We open the Church's Carol Service with songs from our Nativity and our Harvest gifts are added to those of the Church and given to Impact, a local charity for the homeless. This year the children enjoyed hearing about the work of Impact from Jeremy Butler and helping him to load his car with many bags of food and toiletries!

Rev Andrew Porter or our Chair of Governors say a blessing at the end of our church services (and also often help us out on the sound system!) Team Leader for Youth and Children's Ministry Susannah Thackray volunteers weekly in school and leads multi-sensory activity days as part of the annual global prayer event 'Thy Kingdom Come'. Many of our governors, including our Chair worship at Holy Trinity and one of the Church's Wardens is also a regular volunteer in school.

We work with Rev Cathy Porter who is an author and illustrator. We have helped her in the process of writing books for young children on faith, trialled her resources for churches and schools based on one of her books 'My Easter Egg Hunt' and created an Easter Service based on this book. We are currently working with her and the people at 'Signpost' to create our version of the Understanding Christianity 'Big Frieze' by Emma Yarlett that will be displayed both in school and in church.

Our Local Community:



We strive to meet the needs of our community. We established a 'Walking Bus' to support parents with children at both our school and the local junior school. We have recently extended our wrap around care to provide a flexible Breakfast Club and a popular After School Club, both of which are offered to siblings and ex-pupils.

We welcome members of the local community to our Christmas and summer fairs and within our school day such as volunteers to help in class, hear readers or teach recorders. Last year we had a coach from Nottingham Forest supporting English lessons as well as teaching PE and refereeing football matches at lunchtime! Local sports providers are invited to lead PE sessions or after school clubs which have included tennis, cricket, archery, basketball, gymnastics and dance. Other local organisations also run lunchtime and after school clubs such as Drumba, 'Magical Maths' ukulele sessions and iPad club. We try to offer a broad range of activities to enable 'life in all its fullness'.

We also actively participate in a range of events within our local community including education activities led by the team at Southwell Minster, the Christmas Tree Festival at Southwell Methodist Church, singing our Nativity songs at Southwell's Late Night Christmas Shopping Event, making lanterns and providing refreshments for Southwell's annual Lantern Walk and the town's yarn bombing events.

Our school is collaborated with Caunton Dean Hole Primary School, we are part of the Minster School Teaching Alliance and will soon be part of MITRE, the Minster School Academy Trust.

We lead an annual service together with the children from Caunton. The theme for 2019 is 'Who Is Our Neighbour', we will be sharing our work with 'Signpost' and 'The Mustard Seed Project' in Kenya (see 'Our Wider Community' below) and the children from Caunton will be sharing who their Harvest gifts support and their Toilet Twinning links.

We support students from the Minster School with Work Experience and Duke of Edinburgh Awards and their Sports Leaders plan and run our Sports Day at their school. We also support students from local universities and colleges who are training to work as teachers or teaching assistants.

We are currently supporting the staff at a local small infant school with the teaching of Early Years, phonics and guided reading and supported another local primary school a few years ago in leading Collective Worship. One of our teachers is a Minster Leader for Education in RE, Collective Worship and Christian Distinctiveness within the Minster School Teaching Alliance.

Our Wider Community:



We support local and national charities that are important to our children and their families. For example we currently support the National Autistic Society and the British Heart Foundation because we have children or children's family members that have been supported by them and in the past we held annual 'Big Yellow Friday' to support the Children's Liver Disease Foundation. We support key national fundraising events such as Children in Need and Red Nose Day to foster a sense of being part of a much wider community than our small infant school. This year we will also be supporting the church's Christian Aid Week.

Our World Wide Christian Community:



As part of teaching children that Christianity is a worldwide religion we support The Mustard Seed Project in Kenya. This is a charity founded by a former member of teaching staff that is building a school and supporting that school's community in a number of different ways such as through building a well, providing health care and adult literacy lessons and supporting sports teams. The children are encouraged that our individual small donations of 1ps and 2ps can make a big difference to the children there, living out the belief that 'faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains' Matthew 17:20. We hope to deliver our links further such as through pen pals and sponsoring a toilet in a similar way to Caunton and The Minster Schools' Toilet Twinning.

One member of our staff has a family link with a school in Lismore, Australia. Through this link, the children have been able to reflect upon and share their thoughts about their own community and the communities of others, who can offer the support and guidance and what is important to them. We have learnt about the challenges other communities face and how they strive to overcome them by exploring wider moral questions, such as: Australia Day or Invasion Day: is it a celebration for all? As two of our current pupils have experienced living in Australia themselves, these pupils have been able to share personal experiences with their peers.

What Our Community Says:

I really know that I try my best; I sometimes get it right and sometimes wrong. (Pupil)

We share our ideas to make our work better. (Pupil)

It's about growing together to be the best we can be. (Pupil)

Holy Trinity is a very welcoming small school with a strong community feel. (Parent)

It is such a caring environment for children to learn in. Each child feels valued and important. (Parent)

Excellent adherence to Christian values – primary focus on what we consider at home to be the most important things – being kind to others and living selflessly. (Parent)

You are an extension of our family. The school is so welcoming – we feel like we 'belong'. (Parent)

Whilst it would have been the easier choice to send our youngest to an alternative, we really couldn't deprive him of the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful school' (Parent)

Thoroughly enjoy the company of the children. They are pleasant and well behaved with good manners. They take an interest in what we are doing and join in with us. It's nice for their age group to mix with us. (Church member)

It is a warm, friendly and affectionate community that strives to involve everyone who has a relationship with the school. It is kind and loving, thoughtful and generous of heart. (Parent)

Every child and adult associated with HT is not just important because they are members of the school but because they are seen as unique individuals within God's creation. At HT the spiritual aspects of life are recognised and nurtured alongside the academic and emotional needs of all. (Staff)

Holy Trinity has helped me see God through the eyes of a child. (Staff)

Working at HT school has shown me how a church school can interweave a Christian ethos naturally into the school day, through prayer, meaningful CW and a strong, working together as a Christian community feel which is all strengthened by being in close contact with HT and other churches. (Staff)

The values of the school reflect Christian values in ways which are meaningful to the children, relevant to their needs and positively impact on the children's' walk of faith. (Governor)

Children often see things in a new light, which enables my faith to grow through listening to them and seeing things through their lives. (Church member)