



Portesham C of E VA Primary School

Christian Ethos Statement

"live in harmony by being to each other responsive, humble and compassionate"

-after the example of Christ Jesus.

(1 Peter 3:8)

School or County Policy - School
Staff Reviewer - Mr C Brown - Acting Head Teacher
Governors Reviewing Committee - FGB
Date Reviewed - September 2017
Review Period - 3 year
The date this policy was adopted (September 2017)

We believe that a Church School like Portesham School has a responsibility to provide its children with a truly balanced choice. From the starting point of being a Church School; this choice pays proper diligence to the integrity of both views. All of us, children and adults, now live in a post Christian society and so through living out the Christian values witnessed by the school, by the time each child leaves at the end of year 6 they may be closer to being able to make a truly informed choice.

The following from the Church of England's own central website details the Church of England's vision for education.

Our vision for education is deeply Christian, with this promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework.

This framework is rooted in four basic elements:

- ***Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills:*** *enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.*
- ***Educating for hope and aspiration:*** *enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely with things and people going wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.*
- ***Educating for community and living well together:*** *a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.*
- ***Educating for dignity and respect:*** *the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.*

Our vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole community and its environment, whether national, regional or local. It is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthy plural society and democracy, together with a healthily plural educational system.

THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF PORTESHAM

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

"Believing that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation" - Resolution of the General Synod of the Church of England.

"A Christian school cannot be part Christian, but must be Christian in every aspect of its life" - Robert Runcie.

Ethos

It is easy to say simply 'ethos' but ethos cannot be left to chance. It is neither hidden nor accidental. It must be thought about since it is the collection of positive values upheld by the school and in a church school must be the manifestation of the Christian faith professed by the school.

It pervades and underpins all aspects of school life. Acknowledging God as the power behind the universe means that we believe that He is at work in His world and that every human experience presents us with the opportunity to deepen our knowledge and love of Him.

The foundation the school provides cannot separate learning from life nor spiritual values from an understanding of one's place in society.

It is not our role to indoctrinate since this cannot lead to true integrity of faith. Rather our stance should be one of presenting the gospel that we believe in for serious consideration by all in their own individual search for truth.

A school is more than a collection of individuals. A church school has an integrity of faith which transcends the philosophy of each individual and which allows the personal integrity of its members to be maintained but which should not be compromised by any person or group. It is maintained and supported by those - staff, pupils, Governors, parents - who have a commitment to faith and by those others who are in sympathy with the Christian philosophy of the school.

The ethos in the school is never complete or finished. It is constantly evolving, through the contributions made by each individual in the school, day by day.

Worship

Our role is to affirm our faith. We are a worshipping community where worship is presented not just as a human activity carried out by believers but also as a divine activity in which God is present and communicates with His people. Our corporate worship gives all members the opportunity to understand being part of a worshipping community, to learn of the Christian calendar (and the Sacraments) and to experience feelings of wonder and awe. Individuals are encouraged to become actively involved at whatever level is appropriate to their own thinking and are asked always to give respect to the worship of the school as a whole. From this value base, although our worship is founded in the Anglican tradition, we hope to foster and develop the ecumenical nature of our school.

Religious Education

We recognise the significance of helping children to understand the inner dimensions of religion and give Religious Education due importance in the structure of our curriculum.

Relationships

The quality of our relationships is fundamental to our commitment to show Christian love in action - our responsibility "to love as Christ loves us." Our belief that we are all God's people and are loved by Him is reflected in

- (i) our active seeking for that, which is of value in each individual,
- (ii) our positive support for those with real or self-assessed failure,
- (iii) the way in which we speak to and treat other people and
- (iv) the way that we speak about other people and situations.

We hope that our active encouragement of pupils to do the same will engender respect and tolerance for all people (regardless of race, gender, faith, etc.) and will foster a close involvement in the community.

Discipline

Like all schools, we need to develop discipline but not for its own sake. We are not seeking conformity or unthinking obedience but the development of self-discipline. This requires trust not suspicion, an "openness" where teacher and school respond to and respect the pupil and it requires that authority means responsibility not privilege. It would be an abdication of our genuine concern for the development of young people as whole beings if we did not make them aware of our disapproval of acts damaging to the well-being of themselves, our community and to individuals within it. However, this must always be within the framework of Christian loving relationships. We abhor the deed, not the person, and should always work for an outcome which allows the individual to grow.

The school behaviour policy sets out clear expectations regarding behaviour and allows breaches of school rules to be dealt with in a consistent manner, which is fair to all. The policy makes it clear exactly what consequences follow a particular breach of the rules. Pupils are made aware of the behaviour policy through regular behaviour support lessons in PHSE time. Pupils who are removed from the mainstream of the school for a day or longer are given the opportunity to reflect on their actions within a spiritual context and are re-integrated to the school after an interview with a senior member of staff.

Pursuit of Excellence

Respect for the special quality of each individual means that all members of our community should be encouraged to develop to their full potential. Anything less would be an abrogation of our responsibility to use to the full those talents given by God. The more we care, the higher the standard in all aspects of school life that we should expect, but these standards must be appropriate for each individual. All should have the opportunity for successful learning.

Curriculum Content

The choice of content is an important aspect of the curriculum for it sets the agenda for the development and public revelation of the values upon which the ethos of the school is based. It is too simplistic to place responsibility for the development of Christian values in some areas of the curriculum alone. Whilst it may well be that in the content of the curriculum values are more pertinent in some places than others, it would be a denial of professional integrity to assume some areas of the curriculum can be excused responsibility for the formation and promotion of Christian values. It is not necessary to introduce religious truths or conclusions into curriculum matters where they do not naturally or appropriately belong but we must be constantly aware that there is no aspect of knowledge and understanding that does not ultimately relate to God and reveal His glory in the world. All curriculum areas provide opportunities for wonder and reflection and for the understanding of the need to care for God's people and world. All aspects of the curriculum need to be set in the full framework of our school life.

Our success as a Christian school cannot easily be measured. It is difficult to know how far our attempts to live out our Christian values have really touched the young people in our care. For some it is easy, they come to us with a clear faith and this is strengthened whilst they are with us. For others it is not easy, we never know how many we have really reached. We live in hope and faith that we have in some way made an impact on each one of them - that at some time in their lives they will value and appreciate the Christian faith that they experienced at Portesham CofE VA Primary School.

The 5 R's

Within our school community, we praise individuals who demonstrate acts linked to our fundamental beliefs, referred to as our 5R's. The 5R's echo acts of Christ and demonstrate exemplary individual characteristics.

Reflective - reflect on the message of the Gospels. Jesus summary of the 10 Commandments: love God with all your heart and with all your soul and then, love your neighbour as yourself. These commandments cannot be separated and are two sides of the same coin. A Christian application in School, encourages pupils to reflect about the impact of the behaviour (good or bad) on those around them.

Risk taking – dare to be different. Follow God's path even when you are swimming against the tide. A Christian application in School might be in relation to bullying: other children standing up for the survivor of the bullying. Jesus is often portrayed in the gospels, as prioritising and prizing those who exist on the margins of society –or indeed the classroom.

Resilience - be resilient to those who may encourage you to take the easy path. Strong echoes of the previous R. Resilience is very clearly expressed in the life of Jesus, who resisted the temptation to succumb to the world –even dying on a cross. Resilience therefore draws attention to the cost of taking the risk.

Resourcefulness - use and uncover the God given talents that we all have. Also resourcefulness can be contrasted to wastefulness. For Christians, we believe that God gives us all things as a gift. Therefore we should not be lazy with our treatment of what God has given us. This of course ties in with care of the environment etc...

Relationships – Christians believe that a relationship with Jesus is the most valuable thing that you can have. This relationship with Him is not something that is hidden away, but the nature of our relationship with Jesus should inform our relationships with all other people. Jesus' relationship with us, is one of love –as defined by his self-sacrifice on the cross. That is what love means in the Christian context.

1. If there are any 'Safeguarding' issues that arise from the implementation of this policy then they should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding policy. This policy may be found on the school website or accessed via the school office. Any emergency should be referred directly to the school by telephone or in person for the attention of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Single Equality Policy. The general equality duty requires that, in the exercise of their functions, schools must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010. This school endeavours to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations for all.