



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

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Our Vision, Mission, Values and 6 Key Ideals

Dear Parents/Carers,

As the first full week of the Autumn term is in full swing, I would like to share with you the vision, mission, values and six key ideals of our school.

Our Vision

'We aspire to be a community living life in all its fullness. We share, care, learn and love with God, valuing the dignity and respect of all humanity and creation. Through the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus' Kingdom comes and everyone can flourish together.'

What does our vision mean to us?

We aspire to be a community living life in all its fullness: The Church of England's vision for education.

We share, care, learn and love with God: Our Mission

Valuing the dignity and respect of all humanity and creation: A link to Jonah and the Whale

Through the power of the Holy Spirit: The Trinity

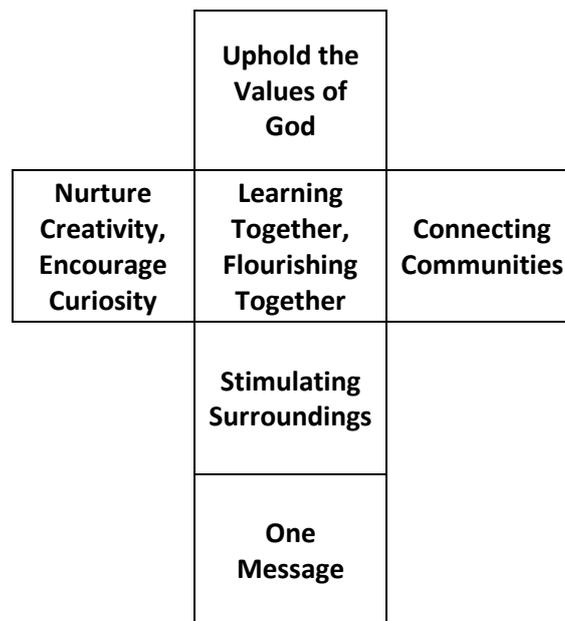
Jesus' Kingdom comes: Link to the Lord's prayer

And everyone can flourish together: Community and Achievement

Our Mission

'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God.'

Our Values and 6 Key Ideals



Last year, all stakeholders were given an opportunity to share what they wanted for the children of St Mary's. All these wishes were grouped together and then a heading was created which represented the wishes within each category. This created our six key ideals above. Our six key ideals underpin our vision.

Our vision is rooted around the Bible story of Jonah and the Whale. To explain how this story links to our vision, mission, values and key ideals I have attached a document for you created by Father Andrew for your understanding.

Children will notice a difference in the environments across the school. They are more reflective of our beautiful outdoor surroundings. Classrooms are now earthy and neutral in colour and will inspire curiosity but will also act as a third teacher in the classroom with a real purpose in supporting the learning process. Our new curriculum has been designed with the intent of nurturing creativity and enabling pupils to learn, ensuring that this learning sticks and to use metacognition to move their own learning and ideas forward. Our new regular reporting procedures in home learning diaries will inform parents and further connect them to support their children.

In every classroom and communal area, our vision, mission, values, key ideals and bible story are on display so that everyone who is in our school or visiting our school knows what it is that we do that makes us distinct from other schools.

In the weeks ahead, your children will read and explore the story of Jonah and the Whale and begin to identify learning behaviours and how they will support them in flourishing as individuals. I have attached a copy of the learning behaviours that we will be promoting.

Pupils understand that:

- To grow well, trees need a specific diet.
- To grow our minds, we need positive learning behaviours that enable us to succeed.
- If we work together and learn effectively with positive learning behaviours then there will be opportunities to take learning further so that we will flourish, just like a blossoming tree.

We are very excited to be launching house teams. Every child in the school will be in a house and they will earn points for their team when they demonstrate their values or positive learning behaviours. Our positive behaviours will be taught to pupils and displayed across the school. The idea is that they are not just achieving points for individual recognition but to be part of a greater achievement within a team and that their positive behaviours will impact on others.

Every week, one or two children in each class will be chosen to be the 'head teacher's achiever of the week.' They may achieve this for many reasons such as persevering with a difficult challenge, showing creativity or maybe going out of their way to be a kind citizen. The achiever of the week will be presented with a rosette of which they will be able to wear for the week to be acknowledged by staff and visitors. They will then take this home as a keepsake to remind them of their achievement. This will be replacing the golden table.

We will be recruiting house captains in year two who will take on the role of counting the points for their teams across the school and they will deliver a motivational message to their team every week. At the end of each half term the winning team will have their colour placed onto a wooden trophy with their team's name on. House teams will continue when pupils transfer to the Juniors. Siblings will be grouped into the same teams in preparation for sports day.

We will also be recruiting Eco-Warriors, Worship Acolytes and Pupil Parliament across the school as pupil voice is a very important part of giving our pupils responsibility and ownership for their school and indeed their world. Details of how to apply for these roles will be sent to you shortly by Mrs Thomas.

We do hope that you start to see our vision in action and its impact as we move through the Autumn term.

Your Sincerely,

Miss Edey

Headteacher

Engaging with the Christian distinctiveness of our school: **A guide for parents**

Six key ideals for St Mary's Infant School

- 1. Stimulating Surroundings**
- 2. Learning Together, Flourishing Together**
- 3. Nurture Creativity, Encourage Curiosity**
- 4. Uphold the Values of God**
- 5. One Message**
- 6. Connecting Communities**

A suggested theme bible passage: The story of Jonah

A suggested theme bible verse: Thy Kingdom Come (Matthew 6: 10; Luke 11: 2)

A short explanation of how they all fit together

Everyone thinks they know the story of Jonah!

Man told by God to warn the people of Nineveh. Man too frightened to go, so boards ship going in the other direction. Man thrown overboard following a big storm and swallowed by big fish. Man spat out on beach and learns his lesson. Man goes to Nineveh and delivers message

Everyone thinks they know the meaning of the story. It's about obedience, we think. Nothing could be further from the truth!

What we need to hold in our minds is that Nineveh is the enemy. When Jonah was told by God to Nineveh to preach destruction by God because of their wicked ways, it would be a bit like you or I being asked to travel to an enemy and tell them that our God was going to destroy them because they weren't being kind. Would you do that? No, nor would I. It would require foolhardy bravery of the sort!

So I can quite understand Jonah trying to get out of the way. But fortunately, God doesn't give up as easily as we do!

To remind you of the rest of the story which is often forgotten and suggestions how the strands may connect:

- God asks Jonah to perform a dangerous difficult and frightening job. **Connecting communities**
- Jonah runs on board a ship going to Tarshish in the opposite direction manned by foreigners. **Learning together, flourishing together**
- A great storm arises through which Jonah sleeps. **Stimulating surroundings**
- The sailors panic and throw the cargo overboard. Eventually they wake Jonah. They all pray to their gods, but Jonah knows he is the reason for the storm. He persuades them to throw him overboard and they reluctantly agree. The storm ceases and God sends a big fish to save Jonah. **Nurture creativity, Encourage curiosity; Uphold the values of God**
- Jonah is in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights **One Message (This is likened in the New Testament to the 3 days of Jesus' death before he was raised to life on Easter Day)** He praises God in a song. He is spat out on the beach. **Learning together, flourishing together**
- God calls Jonah again and this time Jonah obeys, travels to Nineveh, a huge city, and proclaims, "After 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed" **Connecting communities**
- The people of Nineveh change the way they live their lives. They stop eating rich food to show they are sorry. The king commanded all people and all animals to wear rough cloth to show their sadness at the bad things they had been doing. **Uphold the values of God**
- God changes his mind and forgives them. Jonah gets very cross because it has made him look silly. He wants his enemies to be punished. He sulks. He says, "I knew this would happen. I knew it when I was in my own country. It is why I ran quickly away to Tarshish. I knew you were a God who is kind and shows mercy. You don't become angry quickly. You have great love. I knew you would rather forgive than punish them." **Learning together, flourishing together**
- God says, "Do you think it is right for you to be angry?" **Uphold the values of God**
- Jonah stomps off and sits down outside the city. God made a castor-oil plant to grow up to give Jonah shade in the hot sun. Jonah was very pleased to have the plant but the next day God made a worm eat the plant, so it withered, and Jonah got very sunburnt. **Nurture creativity, Encourage curiosity**

- Jonah gets even more downhearted, weak in the heat, and angry. God asks, once again, “Do you think it is right for you to be angry?” After Jonah says he thinks it’s fine to be angry God delivers a final statement which contains the real meaning of the book. “You showed concern for that plant. But you did not plant it or make it grow. It appeared in the night, and the next day it dies. Then surely, I can show concern for the great city Nineveh. There are many animals in the city. And there are more than 120 000 people living there. Those people simply do not know right from wrong.” **Learning together, flourishing together; Nurture creativity, Encourage curiosity; Uphold the values of God; One Message; Connecting communities**

The story of Jonah is therefore really about God’s love for the whole world rather than just the people we like or who are the same as us. It encourages acceptance, allows second chances and calls us to tolerance of people who might be very different from us even though they look the same. In a school which has a low proportion of other faiths and a high white British percentage of children it is vital for us to address questions of diversity and tolerance. The story of Jonah demands that we do just that.

It is easy to draw out many of our theme Christian values from the story: Compassion, respect, sharing, trust, tolerance, humility, self-esteem, peace, thankfulness, responsibility, friendship, perseverance, forgiveness, courage etc

Because (for me at any rate) it has a bit of a comic book, tongue in cheek style which encourages you not to take the narrative too seriously, it is easy to regard it as a story with a meaning rather than as historical truth. It is a very attractive story for KS1 children because of the high level of action and adventure!

The overriding desire of God in the story of Jonah seems to be that of making the world a better place and encouraging human beings to behave more thoughtfully. Rather as if we were aiming at making the world in which we live more like heaven, the Kingdom of God. As if we were engaged in a mission to help God’s Kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. This, of course, is a prayer that many children know and pray frequently, so it seems a natural verse from the bible to use as a reminder of what we are about as a school: the aim to allow our children to grow into whole human beings who are in touch with their emotions and able to contribute to the world to make it a better place. It also pulls us straight back into the Christian Distinctiveness of our school as Jesus was the person who first prayed the Lord’s Prayer.

Quotations from the International Children’s bible Andrew Holford

How to earn house points

House points are awarded to children who display any of the following learning behaviours:

- **Perseverance** - when you are facing a challenge, you use your mind and your body to overcome it.
- **Self-motivation** – ability to motivate yourself
- **Resilience** - ability to bounce back from stress, adversity, failure, challenges, or even trauma.
- **Collaboration** – being able to work with others
- **Responsibility** - you do the things you are expected to do and accept the consequences (results) of your actions.
- **Independence** - freedom from the control or influence of others. Making your own decisions.
- **Contribution** – give something to the success of a lesson or project
- **Effective questioning** – to ask something to clarify meaning or understanding
- **Active listening** – stop talking, focus on what is being said, listen to ideas not just words and look at the person talking.
- **Proactive** - make things happen, instead of waiting for them to happen to you
- **Research** – carefully learn and investigate to discover and explain new knowledge.
- **Risk taking** – be brave and try new things
- **Problem solving** - thinking and making decisions on your own.
- **Promoting safeguarding** – helping to create a safe, caring and inclusive environment.
- **Growth mindset** – sees challenges as opportunities to grow because they understand that if something is hard it will push them to get better.
- **Metacognition** - reflecting on your own thoughts to gain insight into your feelings, needs, and behaviours and how we learn, manage, and adapt to new experiences, challenges, and emotional setbacks