



SCHOOL AIMS, VISION, VALUES and ETHOS



Our School Vision:

We are God's children and global citizens. We will be bold enough to use our voices, brave enough to evoke change in the world and strong enough to stand up for what is right. We are valued and are part of a Christian family that grows together in faith, love and kindness.

Associated values: Courage, Compassion, Forgiveness and Joy.

Great Easton Church of England Aided Primary School is distinguished by the active partnership and atmosphere of trust between the church, family and school. High priority is given to providing quality learning experiences so that all individuals can achieve personal excellence within a happy and secure Christian environment. The school community encourages pupils to meet the challenges of life ahead by fostering positive attitudes, acquiring knowledge and skills and promoting a life-long enthusiasm for learning. It is our vision that children will leave Great Easton with a love of life and a love of learning.

Safeguarding Children

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Please see our Child Protection policy for more details.

Our Vision

Love is central to all we do at Great Easton. Our vision was carefully designed to reflect the collective viewpoints of all staff, children, parent and governors and as a result was written as a pledge for all. It is spoken aloud in worship assemblies and classes. Most children are also able to sign the vision in Makaton. Our associated values: courage, compassion, forgiveness and joy along with the vision underpin and inform our daily practice and decision making at all levels. We listen to our children and work with them to make bold changes and choices, such as: removal of homework to create happier family times and teaching the children to take ownership over their learning; develop their growth mindset and understanding of lifelong learning. The children know their thoughts, feelings and opinions matter and are listened to. For example informing policies such as SMART learning, corridor displays, active wear, school animals and curriculum re-design.

The vision is shared extensively on all policy documents, newsletters to parents, a display in our hall, in every room of the school. The staffroom has a kite and staff are encouraged to write a bow explaining how pupils and staff fulfil the vision. Holding it central to our daily lives and decision-making.

Governors and staff drive forward the school vision with strategic planning and careful monitoring. Staff are well trained and up to date with the latest Church of England thinking. The headteacher attends termly briefings led by the Diocese and staff attend various training which enable us to strengthen our Christian community.

The school works closely with the Diocese and Church developing children's understanding of their Christian family. The rhythm and flow of the school is interwoven with the liturgical calendar. The church is an extension of our school and used as a space for worship, a theatre for performances and a classroom. These close partnerships enable the children to appreciate their active roles as God's children and Global citizens.

Our Courageous curriculum was developed to reflect our vision and aspirations for our pupils. It allows for courageous advocacy at its very heart and deeper learning across all foundation subjects. Starting with a philosophical question, driven by key concept words (including key Christian values) and culminating in a big outcome. Ultimately, we are passionate that children will leave GEPs as global citizens, ready for life in the twenty-first century by creating opportunities for learning that are engaging, motivating and memorable. Our new curriculum is a system that

encourages independence, curiosity and creativity; a system that produces collaborators, innovators, leaders and, above all, a system that helps our children to understand what it means to be Christian and 'let all that you do be done in love'

Our shared understanding of spiritual development is about considering what it means to be human and responding to life's experiences through the search for meaning, purpose and values by which to live.

We cultivate spiritual growth through house team days, quiet times, opportunities to slow down and re-connect to nature, ponder, ask questions and sit with a difficult thought. Thus ensuring their sense of worth, place in the world and the ability to be happy in their own skin meaning that they have a love of learning, life and living.

SMSC and British Values: At Great Easton Cof E VA Primary SMSC and British Values underpin all that we do and are part of our ethos - encouraging a love of learning, life and living within distinctively Christian surroundings.

The Fundamental British Values are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty and mutual respect
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

SMSC - Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural development

Spiritual Development

As part of our Christian distinctiveness we have a commitment to nurturing childhood spirituality and well-being. It is at the heart of all we do. Children at Great Easton learn that they are unique and special from the moment they come into the Foundation Stage - they are encouraged to love and care about each other and the world. Opportunities to live, learn and grow in faith are afforded our children through the arts, language, outdoor learning and experiences or visits. We enable children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Moral Development

Our children have a clearly defined sense of right and wrong underpinned by Christian values and the teachings of Jesus. In addition, they are guided toward consideration of wider moral issues through their study themes and classroom discussion and debate. We enable children to distinguish right from wrong. We also encourage children to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely.

Social Development

Behaviour and the quality of all relationships within our school have consistently been judged as 'outstanding'. Our children genuinely care about and consider the feelings of others. They take their social responsibilities seriously both locally, nationally and internationally through charitable support and child sponsorship. We help our children to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England, through worship assemblies, history, geography and PSHE lessons.

Equality and Diversity Development

Children at Great Easton are encouraged to explore beliefs and experiences; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; using imagination and creativity to reflect. We encourage further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation for and respect for their own and other cultures through learning across the curriculum, using Oddizzi as an online resource to partner us with schools around the world and through the opportunity to visit other places on educational visits. We work hard to ensure children show respect for other people, and encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England. It is important that all children gain an understanding of the world they are growing up in, and learn how to live alongside, and show respect for, a diverse range of people. We make sure we teach children about the protected characteristics in an age-appropriate and sensitive way.

Everyone being valued as a member of a large and caring family group is central to our school's ethos. This family identity is represented symbolically by our 'school bowl'. The bowl contains glass beads and is filled with water, on which float three candles. The water reminds us that we are surrounded by God's Holy Spirit. The three candles represent the Holy Trinity, and also remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. The beads are of different colours, shapes and sizes, just as the children and adults of our school family are. Everyone in the school family chooses a bead to place in the bowl, and new children and staff are welcomed by selecting a bead and adding it to the bowl in the presence of the school family. Our bowl is displayed in the front entrance but is central to our worship table during our daily worship and assemblies.

The Importance of Teaching Gospel Values

'Schools and school staff are a major influence on the developing values of children. This is an inevitable process...values are principles or convictions that act as a guide for behaviour.' (Values for Life, Jumping Fish).

At Great Easton we have based our values in the wisdom and understanding of the Christian faith and particularly the gospel values founded in the reality of life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The twelve values are: courage, trust, creativity, justice, forgiveness, peace, humility, truth, thankfulness, compassion, hope and friendship. We think about how these values relate to today's society and how they can help us to live a better life. We 'transmit' values in a variety of ways:

- Through the management, vision and aims of the school which is reflected in our ethos. This ensures our school is a safe and caring place where children can share, think about and experience ethical enquiry and cultivate habits required for good moral conduct. All relationships within our school offer a model of values in action.
- Through staff's example and their use of moral language, which will help pupils internalise ideas of what is acceptable and not acceptable in the living, working community of a church school.
- When a love of and respect for classroom values is inculcated so that children learn to resist the temptation to bully or to take more than their fair share at school in order that they can come later to appreciate the global consequences of greed and exploitation.

- Through collective worship which is an excellent opportunity to explore Christian values together. A theme is used for a whole half term and introduced on a Monday to allow it to be explored for the rest of the week.
- Through curriculum subjects and learning that helps children to understand the equal importance of other people and helps individual pupils in the search for meaning and purpose in life.
- Through teaching methods that convey respect for people, respect for truth, acceptance of responsibility for actions and a concern for justice and fairness.

A Christian Perspective on Each Value

Definitions from Values for Life written by Shahne Vickery, Catherine Coster and Verity Holloway.

Courage

Basic to Christian faith is the claim that God is always present in every situation. This belief has led to great acts of courage that have included facing danger and opposition, overcoming fear, making a stand for what is right and encouraging others to persevere. Through prayer people have found the strength to help them be courageous.

Creation and Creativity

Seen from a Christian perspective all of life is a 'gift', entrusted by a loving creator God to humankind for a purpose. This purpose is glimpsed as the creative spirit within each person learns to value and explore, celebrate and enjoy this world in all its mystery and diversity. With this gift comes a mutual responsibility to ensure that creation is not spoiled, but rather sustained and shared by all.

Peace

Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9). Peace-making actions can range from helping to resolve conflict to creating space for stillness. Peace, in the sense of total well-being, is God's intention for the whole of creation, and is a promise that awaits ultimate fulfilment.

Trust

Trust is the basis of all stable relationships, including a person's relationships with God. It is rooted in truth, and will grow through consistent experiences of reliability and integrity. God's commitment to humanity is seen in his willingness to trust ordinary people with the carrying out of his purposes through history.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the means by which damaged relationships are restored. It is an act of the will, motivated by love. For Christians, Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate revelation of God's all forgiving love, and his sacrifice stands as a source of inspiration to forgive others, no matter what the cost.

Justice

The justice revealed in the bible is always seen in the context of love. It includes the call to take responsibility for one another, especially the poor and oppressed, and to see that no-one is excluded from the essentials of life.

Thankfulness

Christians believe that God loves and cares for them in many different ways in all aspects of their life. They know that their response to this provision should be one of thankfulness and praise.

Friendship

Christians believe they can call God their friend because of the relationship made possible through Jesus.

Hope

Christians see their hope in God's promise "that love and goodness have, and will ultimately, overcome all evil". This hope is manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Compassion

Christians believe that their attitudes and actions must reflect the kindness, mercy and compassion of Jesus and the love of God for everyone.

Truthfulness

Christians believe that truth is revealed in the Bible and supremely in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus' teaching we are given an insight into the nature of God and the way in which He means us to live.

Humility

Christians believe that Jesus was both servant and king. He demonstrated this through His life, death and resurrection. Jesus taught his disciples what it means to be truly humble. Christians believe that they can serve God by demonstrating humility through their attitudes and actions. This approach to life runs contrary to many role models presented to children in the media and popular culture.

Generosity

God's generosity is best described as 'grace', love given freely without limit or conditions. This generosity, once experienced and acknowledged by an individual, can in turn release a generous spirit towards others.

Wisdom

Christians believe that true wisdom comes from God. As a believer grows in faith so wisdom will increase. In the Bible wisdom is seen as both a gift from God and a characteristic of God. In his parables Jesus taught us placing trust in God and recognising what is of value in life brings fulfilment.

Perseverance

Jesus frequently encouraged his disciples to 'endure patiently' the difficulties and obstacles they encountered and to persevere in the face of adversity. He himself trusted in God even when his enemies tried to stop his work and plotted his death.

Service

Jesus exemplified in his person, ministry and relationship with God, what it was to be called the "servant king". Christians believe their calling is to follow Jesus' example according to their gifts or abilities. They believe that through serving God in others, "perfect freedom" will ultimately be found.

Responsibility

The Bible teaches that life is a gift from God and it is our responsibility to use our talents and abilities in the best way we can.