

CURRY RIVEL C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT: BIBLICAL UNDERPINNING

Our school vision... 'Healthy trees bearing good fruit' - Matthew 7 v 17

Valuing our Christian foundation, we care for each other and our world. We develop resilience, confidence, creativity and independence through our innovative and diverse curriculum; inspiring and motivating everyone to thrive. Our motto, 'Caring, Curious, Confident' and growing Christian Values, are central to all that we do.

We link this policy with our Christian values of:

- Truthfulness
- Compassion
- Friendship
- Thankfulness
- Respect
- Forgiveness

Our school vision... '**Healthy trees bearing good fruit**' - A phrase taking its lead from Matthew's Gospel chapter 7 verse 17 and Jesus' teaching that: *"...every good tree bears good fruit..."*

Although the original context of these words is about the dangers of false teachers who look like gentle, caring 'sheep' on the outside but inside are wolf-like and dangerous, this is still a great phrase for our school to adopt because 'fruit bearing' in terms of Christian character and understanding is a major theme in Christianity. For example in John's Gospel chapter 15 verse 5 Jesus teaches that: ***"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."***

What is this Christian fruit? Well in terms of Christian character the Apostle Paul fleshes this out in his letter to the Galatians chapter 5 verse 22 and 23. He teaches that: ***'The fruit of the Spirit* (i.e. the purpose of God's work within the Christian heart) ***is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.***'** Not a bad list of characteristics for children to aspire to.

In terms of Christian lives expressed in action, the fruit of 'generosity' and 'kindness' towards others could be seen in any number of ways - i.e. the loving care of neighbour, financial giving, time giving, taking the trouble to learn about others in need in other countries or cultures etc.

Valuing our Christian foundation, **we care for each other and our world.**

Why do we care for each other? This takes us to the central commandments of the Christian faith. In Mark's Gospel chapter 12 verse 28 Jesus is asked which are the greatest commandments, and replies in verses 30 and 31: **"The first is...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."** He continues: **"The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'"** This is why we care for each other; it is Christ's commandment for us to do so, second only to loving God first before everything else.

Why do we care for our world? Well because this is a foundational commandment/commission given to the human race at the beginning of creation. As God created human beings He gave us the role as stewards of His creation. We can read about this in Genesis chapter 1 verse 28 where we find God blessing the first humans and saying to them **"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion** (note: not domination to use and abuse) **over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."** This is primarily why we care for 'our' world because we have the appointed task to do so as faithful stewards of God's creation.

We develop resilience, confidence, creativity and independence through our innovative and diverse curriculum; inspiring and motivating **everyone** to thrive.

Why **everyone** and not just a talented few? The value of all individuals also flows from foundational Biblical passages, and these shape our Christian view of individual worth. It is in Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 where we find the teaching that everyone, every child in our school, are of infinite value because they are created in the image of God, by God, for God. The verse reads: **"Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness..."** Psalm 139 verse 14 also speaks of human beings as: **'fearfully and wonderfully made'.** Psalm 100 verse 3 adds to this with: **'Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.'** And in perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible, John chapter 3 verse 16, (Christianity in a nut shell) we learn firstly from Jesus that **"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..."** All people, without exception, are included in this stunning expression of love.

Our motto, 'Caring, Curious, Confident' and growing Christian Values, are central to all that we do.

Why caring? Because, again, Jesus calls us to **'Love our neighbours as ourselves'.**

Why curious? Because the 'cultural mandate' to care for and develop the world around us includes the maximising of our God-given potential. Growth mindsets etc.

Why confident? This is trickier to pin down because 'worldly confidence' and 'Godly confidence' can be very different things - Donald Trump is confident (!) and yet so was Jesus during his earthly ministry. There's a balance to be struck here because our children will need confidence in this world to be able to face the significant challenges of life within it. They will need to be able to face it with their eyes open and stand with their heads held high.

But from where might this confidence flow? Certainly from a good broad curriculum - knowledge and skills will help build confidence. But again, confidence will also flow from: knowing themselves to be loved and treasured by God, no matter what; knowing themselves to be uniquely created; knowing themselves to be fearfully and wonderfully made; knowing themselves to be accepted unconditionally for relationship with God; and knowing themselves to be so valuable to God that like the good shepherd He will go to the 'ends of the earth' to call us home to Him. All this could help immensely in this confidence building. In the words of Psalm 1 verse 3, they could become: ***'like trees planted by streams of water which yield their fruit in due season, and their leaves do not wither...'***

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All the above can be linked directly to the teaching of the Bible and the example of Jesus.

Revd. Scott.