

St John's Christian Distinctiveness Report



Introduction

This report is intended to summarise how the Christian foundations of the school support and enrich the learning environment and shape the culture and ethos of the school community.

Our school history

Originally known as Keynsham Parochial (parish) School founded in 1857, our school has a distinctive provenance of which we are proud. Our history in Keynsham can be traced back through over 160 years through the school log books which are still in our possession, making it the oldest educational institution in the town. Indeed, up to and including the Victorian and Edwardian periods ours was the only school in Keynsham. In 1960 the school moved to its present site and was renamed St John's Church of England Primary School.

St John's school has as its logo the centuries old image of Jesus as the 'Lamb of God.' This title for Jesus comes from John the Baptist pointing to him in the Gospel of St John in chapter 1, verse 29, and saying, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Since the school is named after John the Baptist (as is St John's Church in the town), the image reflects John's chief purpose of pointing to the importance of Jesus.

Jesus is spoken of as a lamb because this symbolises his innocence. The banner resting on his shoulder and held in its right foreleg represents the cross on which he died and the victory which he has won when he rose from the dead. The school logo and badge is a colourful representation of the school's Christian roots and values. Children wear it proudly and are looking forward to new signage and artwork in the school emphasising its importance.

St John's converted to academy status in 2016 and became a Futura Partnership school. Our school values align Futura values of Respect, Opportunity, Collaboration and Aspiration and leaders within Futura are fully supportive of us as a church school. <https://futuralearning.co.uk/our-values/>

Our school vision and values

The work of St John's is grounded in an educational philosophy that promotes our distinctive Christian character as a church school and strives for excellence in learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted through a wide and balanced range of activities and events.

At St John's we inspire our whole school to love learning and work together so everyone can reach their full potential. Through shared Christian values we recognise the skills and talents of all, nurture creativity and contribute to our community. With exciting opportunities engaging lessons, and challenging experiences we deepen knowledge and understanding, have fun and succeed. Our school vision is fundamental to our teaching and learning approach across the school and it's biblical underpinning is explained within the teaching and learning policy. Our vision supports our curriculum.

Our school motto is, 'Celebrate life in all its fullness. Let's learn together in God's love'.

Be ready, be respectful and be safe are our three school rules.

Religious Education (RE)

As a Church of England School, our RE lessons are important times when children can explore and better understand their own and other people's experiences of Christian and other world faiths. The children explore human life, its aspirations, times of celebration, problems, and challenges.

The Futura intent for Religious Education is that all children develop an awareness of major world religions and world views, including their impact on society and culture. Our pupils should be able to appreciate and respect faiths and beliefs which may be different to their own, which will equip them for their adult life, employment as well as lifelong learning.

Each class has a reflection area where you will find the class collective worship book, a display of the Christian value of the term, a candle, a mirror and a Bible. A lunchtime prayer book is used daily, children read a prayer before lunchtime. Children are encouraged to create their own prayers and add these to our prayer tree in the main school entrance area. To further enhance the opportunities we offer our pupils in developing their spiritual awareness and a quiet place to reflect and pray we have our spiritual garden. This is an area where children and adults can sit quietly, enjoy the peace and calm of natural surroundings.

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC)

At St John's, we take great pride in our approach to SMSC across the school, feeling that pupils should develop into tolerant, caring individuals with a social conscience. SMSC feeds into several areas of life at St John's: collective worship during assemblies; charity and community outreach projects; school council; eco-council; online safety and mental health awareness days; as well as playtime partisans and spiritual and sport leaders. Spiritual Leaders are appointed in each year. Their role is to promote values, encourage reflection and opportunities for students to explore their spirituality.

At St John's C of E Primary School we want to support and encourage our children to become courageous advocates, not just locally but nationally and globally. We believe it is important for our children to appreciate their role as part of a community; to take responsibility, to be able to look after themselves and foster an understanding of their importance, impact and influence in the world. In recent years we have carried out fundraising to raise awareness of issues and support those working for change, including: local foodbank, Comic Relief, Children in Need and Royal British Legion

We aim for our children to develop an excellent grasp on the meaning of belonging to a local and global community and the sense of responsibility that comes with this belonging. These include links with local care home and local charities, support for charities of significance to our children and families, School Council and Eco Council who seek views of the children, giving a voice to concerns and plans, School newsletters supporting local events and community information sharing, working collaboratively with other Futura schools in support of climate and nature developments.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Respect is one of our school values. Pupils understand that respect is shown to everyone, both adults and children. We help them to develop an understanding of, and respect for, their own and other cultures.

Collective Worship

At St John's the children participate in a daily act of collective worship. We have a school song that we sing during collective worship. We also focus on each of the school values every term and complete a home learning activity surrounding the values. Teaching staff and members of the school/church community lead services every day in the school hall. These usually follow the pattern:

Monday: whole school collective worship related to the Christian theme

Tuesday: hymn practice

Wednesday: whole school clergy service, led by a member of the church team.

Thursday: class collective worship

Friday: whole school celebration service (where certificates, medals, etc are awarded)

St John's Parish and Church Choir

The school enjoy participating in the parish and in particular attending services at the Church throughout the year. St John's organise the yearly Keynsham Schools Carol Concert, attended by many schools in the local area. Several children represent the school in the church choir and sing at events such as the Keynsham Winter Festival.

Patronal Festival

Every year we spend a day celebrating the work of our namesake, St John. We reflect together in his teachings and join together as a community in prayer.

Ofsted inspection

Our most recent Ofsted inspection took place on the 2nd and 3rd July 2024, where we were judged to be 'Good' in all areas, other than personal development which was graded as 'Outstanding'.

St John's was described as a "purposeful learning environment", where adults know children and families well and have high expectations of pupils.

Inspectors said "The school's commitment to all pupils taking a full and active role in all aspects of school life is impressive,"

Summary

The Christian foundations and history of St John's underpin everything we do.