



Hope Hamilton Church of England Primary School

What does it mean to be a Church school?

The bible root for the Vines vision is: “4Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. 5I am the vine and you are the branches. The one who remains in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing...” John 15 v 4-5. This also underpins our school ethos.

Church schools were founded to provide an education for all the children in the local community, whatever their religious beliefs, prior to the introduction of state education for all. They are not, and never were, intended to convert children, or their families, to Christianity or to provide education exclusively for Christian children. However, Church schools are distinctive and differ from other schools in some important ways.

All aspects of school life are underpinned by the belief that God loves everyone as an individual so we should love and respect others and love ourselves as God loves us. We believe our school is a place where every child feels special and loved by God for who they are and we hope that every child leaves us feeling they have something unique and special to offer the world in which they grow up.

The **Christian ethos** is about what we do rather than what we say, although faith is freely discussed and children have many opportunities to question and challenge their own views and those of others. Respect for different cultures and beliefs is an intrinsic part of the Christian ethos and learning about other faiths is a vital part of the curriculum.

There is therefore an emphasis on respecting oneself and treating others with respect. Behaviour management is done through a positive approach aimed at developing responsibility for one's actions and forgiving others when things go wrong. Reconciliation skills are taught and practiced.

We are explicit and open in talking about faith. Adults will model pride in their faith and because children hear adults using phrases such as 'As a Christian, I believe . . .', children feel confident in expressing their own faith and beliefs. Faith is valued, discussed and taught with integrity. Children are encouraged to talk about and share aspects of their faith, and to be proud of their faith.

There is a **close working relationships between the Church and the school**. The vicar is a valued member of the school community, regularly leading assemblies and activities, acting as a school governor and working with staff to develop various aspects of the school. He provides a source of pastoral support for the whole community, irrespective of faith.

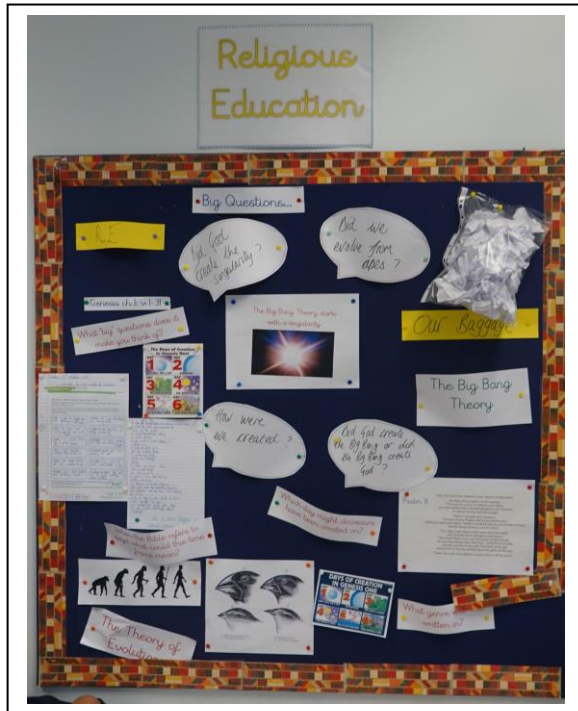
We welcome and celebrate the **diverse beliefs and backgrounds** of the children and ensure that developing their understanding of these is an implicit part of the everyday life of the school so that they can be a real part of building a peaceful future

The school primarily **serves the local community**, including families who are practising Christians, families of other faiths and those of none. Often families of other faiths actively choose to send their children to a church school because they wish them to be taught in a school with a Christian ethos, but where all religions and cultures are respected and valued.

Collective worship is primarily Christian but reflects other faiths through stories, prayers and sharing celebrations of significant festivals. Prayer is invitational and children are encouraged to participate in silent reflection.



We feel that Hope Hamilton is a family in which children are supported to grow and learn in God's love, whilst taking responsibility for and ownership of their learning.



Religious Education is taught according to 'Understanding Christianity' with elements of the new Leicester Agreed Syllabus, reflecting the Christian character of the school but including teaching children about a variety of religions in order to develop their understanding of and therefore respect for the different religions which make up our society, thus leading to respect, understanding and an ability to live peacefully in a multicultural society.

All the requirements of the National **Curriculum** still apply in a voluntary aided school. Multicultural education is a fundamental part of the Christian ethos of the school and an implicit part of every aspect of the curriculum. An understanding of other races, cultures and religions is a vital part of preparing children to take their place in our modern multicultural society and resources, planning and teaching will reflect this, as it would in any school.

Fundamentally, the Christian ethos and the daily life of the school is based on the quote from John 13:34 'Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too are to love one another' and 1. John 4:19 We love because God first loved us.'