

## **St. James as a Church of England school in a multi-faith community January 2017**

The governors agree that any Church of England School is a gift of the church to the community and this is very strongly so in the case of St. James, where our community population is so diverse in terms of faith, culture, language etc.

As a gift to our community, we believe that St James School must make, and does make, a significant contribution to community life and that we strive to be fully inclusive of the children in our wider community. As such we represent a coming together of our diverse community in microcosm.

As an Anglican school we serve the community.

As such we have a crucial role in nurturing faith and spirituality. In this role we endeavour to positively value faith as represented in the world religions. We enable children to explore their own religions and those of their peers so that they can develop a positive understanding of each other's lives and learn to respect one another.

Our collective worship within assemblies gives strength to this nurturing of faith and spirituality:

- Assembly is often a time of strongly tangible but indefinable moments of awe and wonder, which are frequently stimulated by the children's successes and the response of the school community to them or by moments of beauty (e.g. children's singing or dance), celebration (e.g. children valuing their learning and achievement), synergy (e.g. when children's communication of their thoughts reflects their internalisation of the ethos of the school) or pure emotion (e.g. adult and children's responses in the Year 6 Graduation)
- The drilling down into the core meaning and values underpinning the festivals that are celebrated within school
- Pupils' development of prayers to tie in with the assembly calendar, which displays both their beliefs and their sensitivity to the multi-faith make up of the school
- The use of a form of prayer addressed to "God" and ending "Loving God, Hear our prayer" which allows children of all faiths to participate
- The innovation of inviting children to develop whole assemblies including an act of worship

We also have a crucial role in instilling positive values in our children. The school is rooted in the Christian tradition but expresses values that have parallels in all faiths and in humanitarian values:

	Love	Respect	Compassion	Forgiveness
Personal Worth		A Sense Of Belonging		The Preciousness Of Each Individual
	Truth	Honesty	Justice	Perseverance
		The notion of being a gift to the community.		

In our day to day lives these values are reflected in:

- The treasuring of each individual and the efforts made to give strength and integrity in each of us
- Our efforts to maximise inclusion for children with learning difficulties, physical or medical difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties etc through the removal of barriers to participation
- Our nurturing of relationships between all members of our community
- The way we “cross the line” into the lives of our families to provide support and succour where appropriate
- The respect that is given by the staff of the school to our children, our families and the wider community
- The creation of opportunities to explore and experience spirituality and the joy taken in these moments
- The forgiveness afforded to those individuals who challenge the school code of conduct and the perseverance displayed in exploration of children’s issues and development of strategies to enable them to achieve success

As a Church of England school we have set ourselves the challenge of creating the community of the future. To do this we:

- Build our curriculum on the diversity of cultures and faiths in our community to demonstrate to the children our positive valuing of their heritages
- Critically explore the faiths and cultures represented in our community and beyond in order to nurture positive valuing of the members of each group.

In closing, we identified that a key ingredient in our delivery of the role we have taken in our community is the passion that we have for the nurture and development of our children and all of the other members of our community.

Agreed by Governing Body on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2006

Last review January 2015