

St Mary's as a Church School

At St. Mary's we recognise that our academy is a provider of state education for a community where the vast majority do not attend regular Christian worship, although more may identify themselves as "Christian" in a cultural sense. We also recognise and welcome that amongst the children who attend St. Mary's, there are active Christian families from a wide variety of Christian denominations. There are also families that practice other faiths and these are of equal importance to us.

At St. Mary's, we endeavour to promote equality, fairness, diversity and inclusiveness which we believe comes from core Christian values. We also regard the development of spirituality as a central objective for our curriculum and this is seen as we seek opportunities to enrich the experiences through which our children learn within every subject discipline.

We give particular importance to the teaching of RE. **Our aim is not to convert children to faith but to build understanding of faith (particularly Christianity) and no faith** so that as adults, children are able to make important choices of their own based on the knowledge, skills and wisdom they have learnt from our curriculum.

Occasionally, the curriculum may involve teaching children facts, attitudes or providing experiences which some may regard as contrary to what the Christian faith teaches. Such areas of work will be taught sensitively and when appropriate alternative views will be explained. Subjective areas of the curriculum in all subjects will not be taught as fact and children will learn the difference between opinion and fact so that as they mature they are equipped to decide for themselves.

The academy does respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from Collective Worship, RE and Sex Education but outside of these specific areas will not compromise on a child's right to a rich and varied curriculum.

School based collective worship and church services at St. Mary's are primarily aimed at providing children with experiences which will be helpful to them as they mature as young people in the modern world. Collective Worship is also a means of enabling children and adults with Christian faith to actively engage in communion with God.

All our worship is managed in a manner that as far as possible is inclusive to all our children and adults but it is wholly Christian in nature and sometimes contains rituals and words which reflect our Church of England foundation.

We understand our collective mission to be that of providing the highest quality all round education for our children and families and this includes the development of spirituality. We endeavour to provide a curriculum and working organisation that achieves this.

Our two core parables are the Good Samaritan and the Two Sons.

Trevor North, Principal