



What is the theological inspiration that underpins the work of the school at Canon Popham?

At Canon Popham C of E Primary Academy the theological inspiration for our school is based on the parable of the mustard seed.

Again he said, 'What shall we say the kingdom of God is like or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like the smallest seed you plant in the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade'. (Mark 4 30 – 32)

Vision Statement

Our vision is to work together as a Christian community to nurture our children within a happy, stimulating and caring school.

A place where:

- **Christian values are at our heart: endurance, compassion, thankfulness, forgiveness, justice and hope**
 - **Everyone is unique and welcome**
 - **We respect and care for everyone and everything around us**
 - **High standards are expected and achievements celebrated so that everyone is able to reach their full potential**
 - **Self-esteem and confidence are nurtured on a journey of self- discovery**
- EVERYONE MATTERS!**

How is this parable reflected in our vision at Canon Popham?

Our vision is to work together as a Christian community to nurture our children within a happy, stimulating and caring school.

The parable of the mustard seed refers to even the smallest seed having the potential for tremendous growth. This is reflective of our belief about all of our children.. We work with our children to nurture their individual potential in a school that reflects, through its deeply Christian roots and values, the kingdom of God.

A place where:

- **Christian values are at our heart: endurance, compassion, thankfulness, forgiveness, justice and hope**

Our school has an explicit focus on the 6 Christian Values identified in our vision statement. These are explored and celebrated both within the curriculum and as part of our wider school ethos. We support our children to develop a deep understanding



of these values and to put them into practice in their lives, thereby developing a Christian community that reflects the kingdom of God.

- **Everyone is unique and welcome**

As a reflection of the kingdom of God, and in the same way that all the birds of the air are welcomed in the parable, so our school is therefore open and welcoming to all. The uniqueness of every individual is respected and welcomed, as a child of God.

- **We respect and care for everyone and everything around us**

Just as in the parable of the mustard seed, the smallest seed must be nurtured in order to reach its full potential as the largest plant of the garden, we must also care for everyone and everything in our school and community. Respect and care for all of God's creation, and the nurture of all its elements are central to the school ethos. This is reflective of our care not just for individual children, but for everyone and everything connected with our school.

- **High standards are expected and achievements celebrated so that everyone is able to reach their full potential**

The parable of the mustard seed shows the limitless potential of even the smallest individual to become a vital part of God's kingdom on Earth. Therefore, school must nurture all children to achieve their full potential, academically, socially, personally and spiritually, if they are to be reflective of this.

- **Self-esteem and confidence are nurtured on a journey of self-discovery**

God's kingdom on earth is reflected in the diversity of all the birds who rest in the shade of the branches within the parable. Therefore, our school ethos supports all children in their own journey of self-discovery, so that they can contribute to God's kingdom as unique individuals made in the image of God. We aim to empower children to be self-confident individuals, able to welcome and celebrate the diversity within God's creation.

EVERYONE MATTERS!

How is our theological inspiration linked to The Church of England Vision for Education?

The school affirms the principle that everyone matters and that their full potential can be reached through development of every aspect of their lives. This is clearly identified within the Church of England Vision for Education

'The worth of each student impels us to work to fulfil their God-given potential, whatever the religious or other tradition with which they or their family identify, and with special consideration given to those who are disadvantaged. Each is to be understood as respectfully and deeply as possible; to be encouraged to stretch themselves spiritually, morally, intellectually, imaginatively and actively, and to aspire to be well-educated.' (Church of England, Vision for Education, p.10)



What are the school's Christian Values and where can these be found in theology?

Our school has 6 'Christian Values for Life' which underpin all of our work in school. While there are many other Christian Values, these were chosen as being particularly relevant and appropriate for our school's ethos and for the primary stage of education. The school recognises that by setting the foundations with these 6 values, we are supporting and preparing the children to become good citizen's within their communities, for their whole lives.

They are:

Endurance – see Psalm 118

Although the word refers to humans standing firm in the face of hardship, persecution or scorn, it is important to note the constant assurance in the Bible that God's love, mercy, faithfulness and righteousness endure forever. In our academy, we teach the children to develop a sense of resilience and to keep going, when they are facing difficulties, should this be personally or with elements of learning.

Compassion- see Matthew 9:36

Compassion' and 'sympathy' have much in common and both are stronger in meaning than simply 'feeling sorry for' someone.

The words have their roots in the idea of 'suffering with' someone, putting yourself in someone else's shoes and experiencing what they experience. This leads to a desire to act, to do something

In our academy the daily act of thinking about others, being kind and supportive of each other, as well as learning about the wider need for global support of good causes enables children to become good citizens of the future.

Thankfulness- see Luke 17: 11-19

Thankfulness has always been at the centre of the life and worship of God's people. 'Songs of thankfulness and praise...' are at the heart of Christian worship. Thankfulness is directed towards God who gives and sustains life. Seeing the world as God's creation underpins the way we approach everything in life, seeing it as a gift and not as a right.

In our academy, we aim to help the children to be thankful daily for the blessings in their lives, such as the right to education, and to apply this thankfulness daily in acts of worship.



✚ **Forgiveness**- see Matthew 18: 21

Forgiveness is fundamental to the character of God. Throughout the Bible, God is described as slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin. In our academy, we teach the children that as part of restorative practice, and to be created in the image of God, we should forgive, just as God forgives us.

✚ **Justice**- see Proverbs 29:7

Justice also means giving all people - particularly the poor and oppressed - what it is right and fair for them to have: life, health, freedom and dignity. It is about acting out of a concern for what is right and seeing right prevail. In our academy, we aim to help children understand that they have the right to be treated with fairness and dignity at all times, but with this right comes the responsibility of also treating others with fairness and justice.

✚ **Hope**- see 1 Corinthians 13:13

Hope is a universal human phenomenon. Where hope is lost there is despair and disintegration. Hope generates energy and sustains people through difficult times. For some people, hope is so strong that it inspires self-sacrifice to turn hope into reality. True hope is much more than a general idea that things will get better. It is more than a belief in progress, which sees the world and people as getting better all the time, growing away from violence, ignorance and confusion.

In our academy, the value of hope pervades all that we do. Every child matters, every day and as we teach children about growth mindset, we show them that as individuals they can grow and change for the better, and also be influential in their communities and their world. This is the stuff of which we create the kingdom of God on earth.