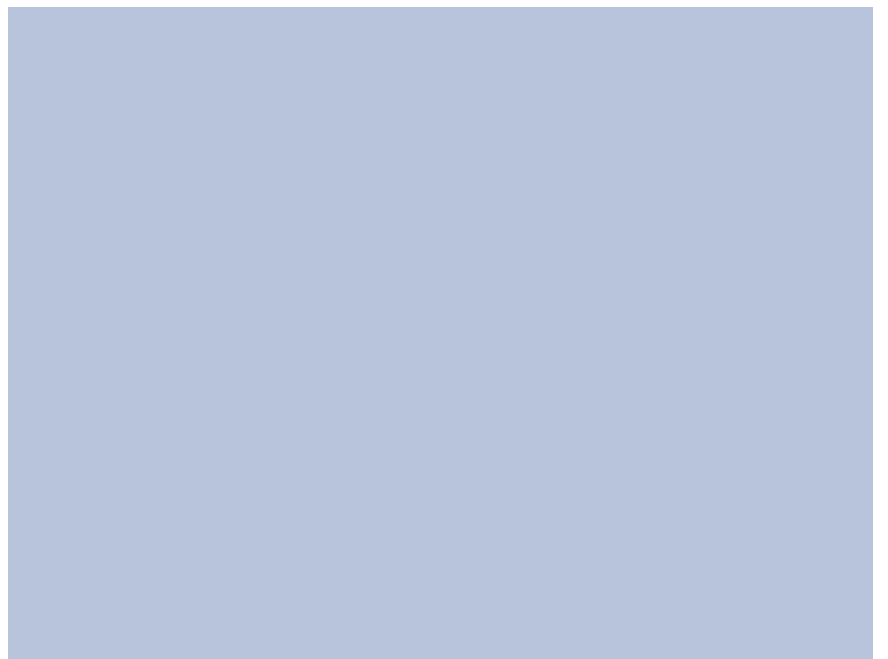


The Quality of Education: Purpose and Provision

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St Christopher's:
A Church of England Academy



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Context

The school's sixtieth anniversary (2018-19) presented an opportunity to pose a series of interrelated, existential type questions :

**What is the purpose of our school?
What are we trying to achieve?
What is our vision?**

In thinking deeply about these questions we are fortunate in being able to draw on our own archive.

At St Christopher's official opening in November 1958 the aim of the school was clear and simple:

"The aim of St Christopher's Church of England Secondary School is to offer a broad education to all its pupils which will equip them to meet the challenge of modern life."

And later in the same piece, "a sound education must rest on the foundation of the Christian Way of Life."

Six decades on there remains much to recommend this original vision.

The Trust Deeds (to serve the church going families of east Lancashire), school motto (Ad Gloriam Dei), school prayer, current school mission statement and school virtues, offer a further explanation of what we do and why we do it.

All of these written sources, together with the actions and interactions of generations of pupils, parents and staff, have contributed to St Christopher's collective history and sense of identity with the past and vision for the future, one which takes its central and unswerving inspiration from the Church of England tradition of Christian faith and practice.

But how does all of this fit together? Are we able to offer a coherent and joined-up message, understood by all and widely shared? What then is the 'golden thread' that runs throughout and secures the whole?

Following a fruitful period of consultation involving governors, staff, chaplains and pupils we have agreed to shape an explanation of the school's purpose which springs from firm Biblical roots and will be evident in the manner in which it infuses and shapes the strategic and operational direction of the school. It will be the 'golden thread' and will place the idea of 'relationships' at the heart of our offer.

Foundation Scripture - Our Relationship with God

We have chosen Psalm 1 v1-3, as our Foundation Scripture.

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ **That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither-
whatever they do prospers.**

At the heart of this verse is the 'person', he or she who is able to choose and elects to resist evil and seeks to have 'use' for God and to 'meditate' or study (verses 1-2). The 'person', representing all members of our school community, staff and pupils alike, is nourished spiritually by an ever moving stream and able to flourish, even in testing times.

In some translations the psalm is entitled True Happiness and this complements our long held belief that pupils who are well-supported and fulfilled as unique individuals, made in the image of God, are more likely to prosper, academically but also as individuals and as members of different communities. Some translations use the word 'succeed' rather than 'prosper', perhaps mindful of any association with a reductive interpretation of prosperity as one associated with money and material wealth. We prefer to view prosperity in a wider sense, one which stands for flourishing, success, good health and growth.

Placing the prosperity of all at the heart of our purpose presents a vision of the future which is ambitious, compelling and full of hope.

Psalm 1 also serves to reflect our local context. East Lancashire continues to address the challenges of post-industrial Britain and it can be all too easy to think in terms of an area where the fruit was harvested many decades ago; thriving and noble mill towns characterised by a sense of comradeship and civic pride but now sadly searching for an identity and almost literally ‘withering’. Our purpose is to challenge this dystopian interpretation, replacing it with one which places God given prosperity at its heart.

In order for our school to prosper and in order for this to spill out into the community we commit ourselves to an education which is deeply Christian and based on a relationship with God - the most powerful antidote to the material short termism and moral vacuum offered by the secular world.

Deeply Christian

All pupils and staff are offered an ongoing and meaningful encounter with Jesus and the Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives. This is a gift for all.

We believe that at the heart of Jesus’ mission is the notion of gift, not entitlement; servanthood not domination. The offer made by our school should be seen in this light – a hospitable community in which the prosperity of pupils goes alongside that of the teachers, other staff and governors - a blessing for all, not just for Christians. All associated with our community, especially pupils, experience spiritual development. The many Christians in our care experience preparation for a life of making gifts to others whilst those who are not Christian experience the gifts that Christ offers to all in a way of living that is wholesome (as God intended). In this sense we all learn to live well together in the midst of our diversity.

So what does it mean for St Christopher’s to be a ‘deeply Christian’ school?

- The actions and approaches of the school draw on Biblical sources. Actions are important but so are the foundations, inspiration and motivation for these actions.
- Actions should not be judged in isolation from their context. An approach adopted by a Church school, for example, a commitment to inclusivity, may affirm a shared human value, one found in community schools for example, but not for the same reason or motivation.
- There are numerous, daily occasions when Christian distinctiveness is at the forefront – the practice of prayer, collective worship, services, a strong RE department which helps pupils to think theologically.

Our commitment to all in our community reflects a belief in the worth of each person, rooted in each being created in the image of God and loved by God, and shaped by the teaching and example of Jesus. Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person, and as Christians we are called to follow him in this, and to join together in demonstrating this with particular attention paid to the disadvantaged, excluded and persecuted.



Key Themes

From this vision, rooted in Scripture and from our ongoing model of education, founded on the Christian way of life, emerge three themes through which we are able to provide coherence, relevance and sustainability to our teaching, management of the day-to-day and leadership of ongoing improvements and innovation. These themes run through our whole approach, each in interplay with each other and all contributing to the promotion of prosperity for all.

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| i) | Knowing what it is to be fully alive | RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES |
| ii) | Learning how to live well together | RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS |
| iii) | Securing wisdom and understanding | RELATIONSHIP WITH LEARNING |

i) Knowing what it is to be fully alive (RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES)

Who am I? Why am I here? How then shall I live? (questions posed by former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in ‘Not in God’s Name’). These questions are at the heart of our offer to the young people in our care and for those whom we employ. We do not seek to offer neat answers based on a packaged faith to these questions but rather to ask them and to prepare pupils, students and staff to grapple with finding their own response.

Our school seeks to reveal that “The glory of God is the human person fully alive.” (Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons). And from this we can ask:

- What is it to be fully human?
- What type of school enables this to happen?

We are hopeful that pupils will echo the words of one former student: “After my time at St Christopher’s I don’t know what I want to be but I know who I want to be.”

ii) Learning how to live well together (RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER)

Too often in education we allow a false dichotomy to prevail that sets the pursuit of academic rigour against the need to pay attention to the well-being of children. Our school offers an unequivocal message that there is no such distinction – a good education should promote life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

But it is also a vision which accepts the reality of a living human community. We avoid the expectation of continual perfection and constant upward trajectories, understanding that there are times when we do feel weary and struggle to move forward. This approach acknowledges that prosperity occurs at different times and speeds (the fruit and the leaf, harvesting and withering).

“Not only does God call us to live life abundantly as individuals made in his image and likeness, he calls us to serve one another in community – living and flourishing together.”

Archbishop John Sentamu

Flourishing as part of a school community opens up the notion of character education and the central role that this plays in the curriculum and leadership processes. There are numerous ways across every subject that character can be developed, while the focusing on learning together and quality relationships is central to an effective classroom where children feel inspired and permitted to progress together, not simply alone.

We seek then to promote a vision where pupils can develop with confidence (a better word than resilience) and with a sense of self and hope in the context of a complex and intimidating world and where the promotion of dignity and respect is evident throughout. We acknowledge the ways in which our community can go wrong, seeing this as a cause for lament but not for despair as we seek to promote approaches and actions which will improve the quality of our disagreements and cope wisely when things go wrong. Bad experiences and wrongdoing do not have the last word.

iii) Securing wisdom and understanding (RELATIONSHIP WITH LEARNING)

It is through education that we progress and prosper. Education enables our young people to discover the liberty which comes through understanding, enabling them and preparing them to live prosperous lives, to change society, to create and find rewarding jobs, and to contribute as citizens of the region, country and wider world.

We are then a school which places great store on all pupils being able to experience academic success (prospering):

- to explore all that cannot be demonstrated to us in front of our eyes
- to access the vast repositories of human wisdom
- to understand the world around us
- to gain an insight into the different frameworks by which we can understand the big questions of the universe
- to encounter and wrestle with fundamental questions about God and faith
- to be introduced to the best that has been thought and said and to have an appreciation of human creativity and achievement

This academic success is seen across the whole range of traditional academic subjects and also areas such as music, drama, art, technology, sustainable development and sport.

The experience of academic success goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Success for our pupils ought to mean more than having the knowledge in order to score highly in a pub quiz! We seek rather to promote understanding and see this as moving beyond the Ofsted definition of the word where it is described as the “connection of new knowledge with existing knowledge” to something richer, something associated with the development and promotion of wisdom.

Wisdom is a word rarely used in current discussions around education, although one experienced by the young Christ (Jesus ‘grew in wisdom’, Luke 2:52). It offers a way of encouraging the application of sound judgement and discernment to key concepts and practices associated with school life such as information, skills, assessment, measurement and critical thinking, as well as promoting an affirmation of what is of worth and a rejection, sometimes courageously, of that which is unwise. Teachers will have a clear grasp of the fundamental knowledge required in a scheme of learning but they will also have considered the wisdom that we are seeking to impart in the curriculum.

We want our pupils to experience a depth of learning which requires teachers to have a clear understanding of the relationship between knowledge, understanding and wisdom. The idea of the ‘knowledge based’ curriculum occupies much of current thinking about education but there are limitations to seeing this as the only way of thinking about the curriculum. The use of wisdom is at the heart of human existence, including basic survival, relationships and employment. All of these have clear knowledge requirements but human prospering is secured by moving beyond knowledge in order to draw on wisdom.

Wisdom is a shared conversation not a one-way transaction

Wisdom is not reliant on one expert, but seeks others views

Wisdom is reading slowly and widely

Wisdom is connecting and synthesising, re-using and rejecting

Wisdom loves detail, not just superficiality

Wisdom unleashes imagination

Wisdom needs diversity, not because it’s right but because it’s inherently better

Wisdom is making choices, sometimes between two seemingly good things

Wisdom is inherited from those in community and family around us

Wisdom always permits good questions, but has the confidence to articulate clear answers

Wisdom views mistakes with perspective

Taken together, our vision and the complementary themes, offer an approach which offers a habitable framework within which the operational and strategic work of the school can take place but also an approach which offers sufficient challenge and stretch to all.

This then is a school where human prospering is evident for all, as we educate pupils and students to know what it is to be fully alive, to live well together, to experience understanding and to gain wisdom.

Key Virtues

Our Christian understanding of human prosperity is not limited by our three key themes. Prospering is also evident when an individual exhibits virtuous elements of good character. This idea goes beyond mere values – those things which we consider to be important and which we treasure – to include our own character, the shaping of which is sculptured through schooling as pupils deposit small and regular amounts into the bank of key virtues.

Forgiveness

Promoting forgiveness allows us to nurture pupils by promoting a Christ-like forgiveness at every opportunity. Using Jesus as our example, and particularly his teaching in the Lord's Prayer, our pastoral staff and wellbeing team teach his principles to restore broken relationships, ensuring that following the reconciliation of pupils, 'whatever they do prospers.'

Friendship

We promote healthy friendships by doing all that we can to ensure that our pupils do not 'walk in step with the wicked'. This process is particularly evident during the process of transition from primary school when we pay particular attention to the composition of form groups and make good use of a formalised mentoring programme.

Hope

In our uncertain world we rejoice in the sure and certain Biblical Hope for the future. Bad experiences and behaviour, wrongdoing and evil need not have the last word.

Justice

Pupils can be confident that their actions will be treated justly. Justice is not seen in isolation from the complementary core virtue of Forgiveness as we recognise in reflecting the nature of God and what Christ achieved on the cross, we need both in our school community.

Love

Love underpins all that we do. Our mission statement is headed by Jesus' appeal to 'Love God, and love each other.' Love should be a primary fruit yielded by our tree-like pupils who are planted by those streams of living water that flow from the law of the Lord. After all, 'God is love' (John 1:8) and the more we love, the more we know God and reveal Him in our lives.

Peace

Our sincere hope is that our pupils will experience a life of internal and spiritual prosperity and know something of the holistic Biblical peace known by the Hebrew word: 'Shalom'.

Trust

Proverbs 3:5 implores us to 'Trust in the Lord with all (our) hearts, and lean not on (our) own understanding.' Again, we recognise that the need to offer our pupils the opportunity to trust God and to 'meditate' and 'delight' in the Law, the Word of the Lord!

Parents who send their children to our school, formed as it is around this clear sense of purpose, will not be disappointed. They can take comfort in the knowledge that their child is offered an encounter with Jesus Christ and with the Christian faith and with an education that embraces excellence and academic rigour within the wider framework of spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development, all of which combined will allow their precious and unique child to prosper in all that they do.

The Purpose of St Christopher's (please see diagrams on pages 13 and 14)

Curriculum Aims

The curriculum is the central way in which we seek to bring life to the school's purpose. Our interpretation of what comprises the curriculum is broad and encompasses all learning and other experiences that we plan for our pupils and students.

The aims of the curriculum are to:

1. Offer a meaningful encounter with Jesus and the Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances the lives of pupils
2. Provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve
3. Promote the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils at the school and of society
4. Prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The organisation, structuring and delivery of the curriculum also builds from the school's sense of **purpose**, particularly its promotion of educating for academic success and wellbeing. Our curriculum deliberately brings our pupils into contact with some of the greatest thoughts of all time (knowledge), enabling them to change how they think about the world (wisdom). The curriculum is selective, we cannot teach children all that has been thought and said. We can, however, introduce them to the conversation in which they can join with others, living and dead, to decide what 'the best' might be. Our curriculum serves as an invitation into this conversation.

Curriculum content, its selection and sequencing, is therefore such an important choice and weighty ethical responsibility. In selecting and providing for our curriculum we are reminded that we are not atomised individuals waiting to have our innermost passions discovered; we are, instead, part of God's kingdom on earth - an extended community of minds that stretches back into the past and will stretch beyond us into the future ('Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' Hebrews 13:8).

We relish the opportunity to move beyond the National Curriculum and the confines of exam specifications, real and demanding though they may be, to the creation of a curriculum determined by teachers and within which there is scope to act and manoeuvre; a welcome shift from the decades old culture where the creative role of the school had become diminished, a narrowing had taken place of knowledge, and the professional contribution of teachers has been largely ignored.

However, these opportunities are not all new. We have long resisted, with varying degrees of success, the tide of centrally imposed restrictive accountability measures that narrow that which is prized. A curriculum for life, one which has moved away from a 'metric culture' to 'cultural capital', from the 'hot house' to the 'green house', is one which have long treasured and sought to promote.

Our curriculum provision, building on a vision which is deeply Christian, is one which is wary of commonly held and widely shared aims of education such as 'preparing young people for the 21st century'. How can we decide what is relevant to the ever-shifting 'now'? Or worse still, a curriculum which is deemed 'engaging' or 'relevant' by pupils. An approach of this sort is one where we would have completely lost our moorings.

We aim to promote academic success and wellbeing in an effort to secure and rejoice in the fullness of life and the prosperity of all.

In so doing young people will be supported in their journey to adulthood to be:

- Ambitious and capable pupils and students, ready to learn throughout their lives;
- Enterprising and creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
- Ethical and informed citizens of the local community, country and wider world;
- Healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of families and communities.

The curriculum as a whole provides a clear 'map' made up largely of subjects taught discretely from one another in an effort to acknowledge and preserve their academic distinctiveness. This enables pupils to understand that each subject draws on its own knowledge, made up of those concepts, facts, processes, language, narratives and conventions which have changed over time and will continue to change.

A distinction is drawn therefore between substantive knowledge - the content that teachers teach as established fact - and disciplinary knowledge, a curricular term for what pupils learn about how that knowledge was established, its degree of certainty and how it continues to be revised by scholars, artists or professional practice. It is that part of the subject where pupils understand each discipline as a tradition of enquiry with its own distinctive pursuit of truth.

This approach, the dividing of subjects into academic 'islands', does not prohibit however the search for intelligent connections ('routes') between disciplines, particularly when there is the opportunity for pupils to grasp something of the School's purpose, for example in our work in promoting oracy or pupil leadership. We do avoid however want to avoid tokenistic box-ticking cross-curricularity.

Curriculum Structure

The formal curriculum is delivered primarily although not exclusively through taught lessons organised around five sixty-minute periods per day, organised as a two-week 48 lesson timetable.

Key Stage 3

The key stage 3 curriculum takes the National Curriculum (2014) as its starting point but it is planned, taught and assessed in a manner which is more ambitious than that prescribed.

Subject	Y7	Y8	Y9
Art	2	2	2
Computing	2	2	2
English	6	6	6
Geography	3	3	4
History	3	3	4
Mathematics	7	7	7
MFL	5	6	3
Music	2	1	2
PE	4	4	4
PSHE	1	1	1
RE	3	3	3
Science	6	6	6
Technology & STEM	4	3	3

Allocation of periods across a two week timetable of 48 lesson.

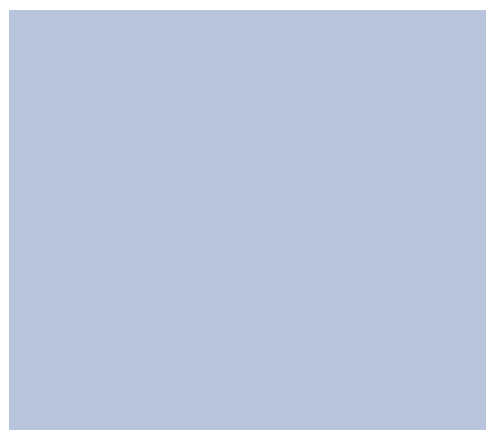
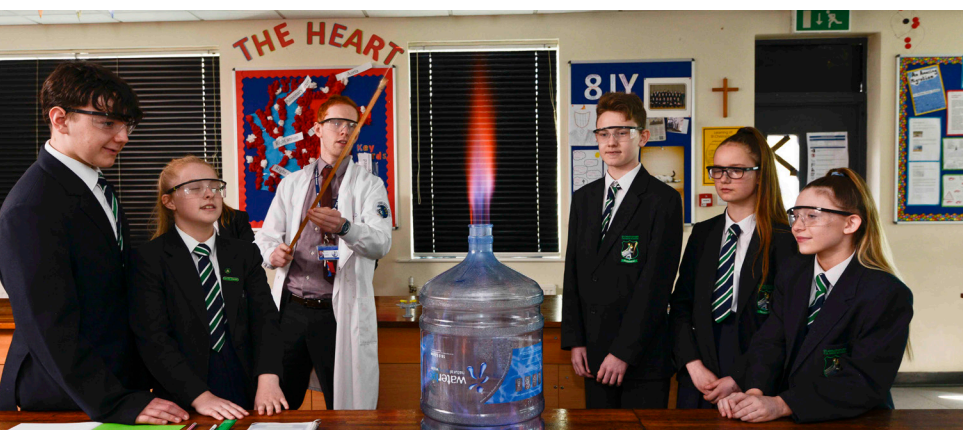
Key Stage 4

In years 10 and 11, all pupils follow a core curriculum of English, mathematics, science, RE, PSHE and games. In addition, pupils select three courses from a wide range of GCSE options.

All pupils are provided with the opportunity to study the EBacc suite of qualifications.

Core Subjects	Y10	Y11
English Language & Literature	8	8
Mathematics	8	8
Combined Science	10	10
RE	4	4
PE/Games	2	2
PSHE	1	1

Key Stage 4 core subjects and time allocation.



In addition to the core curriculum pupils are invited to make informed and appropriate options of other subjects to study. Three option subjects are selected giving pupils a total of nine examination courses to follow during this key stage.

Option Subjects for 2019-20 (offered)	Y10	Y11
Art	5	5
Biology	5	5
Business Studies	5	5
Chemistry	5	5
Child Dev (Level 2)	5	5
CiDA (Level 2 Technical)	5	5
Design Tech	5	5
Drama	5	5
Food Prep & Nutrition	5	5
French	5	5
German	5	5
Geography	5	5
Graphics	5	5
History	5	5
Hospitality & Catering (Level 2)	5	5
Music	5	5
Performing Arts (Level 2 Technical)	5	5
PE	5	5
Physics	5	5
Spanish	5	5
Textile Design	5	5

Key Stage 4 option subjects (typical) and time allocation.

Key Stage 5

The school sixth form of 300 students opened in 2010 and has proven to be highly successful, offering the young people of east Lancashire with the opportunity to study as part of a school community which places their spiritual, moral, cultural and academic wellbeing at the heart of all that we do. It is a vibrant part of the school and one where students secure wisdom and understanding and learn how to live well together whilst discovering what it is to be fully alive.

Almost thirty A-level courses are offered in the Sixth Form. Most students continue to study four subjects throughout the Lower Sixth and continue with three of these in year 13. Each subject is allocated nine lessons (hours) across the two week timetable.

A-level subjects offered (2019 entry)

- Art
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Classics
- Computing
- Economics
- English Language
- English Lit & Lang
- English Literature
- French
- Further Mathematics
- Geography
- German
- Government & Politics
- History
- Law
- Mathematics
- Music
- Performing Arts (BTEC)
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Product Design
- Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Textiles

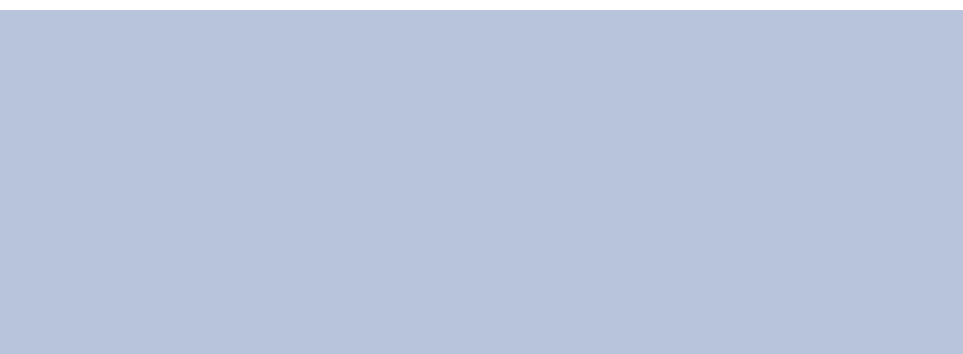
In addition to the formal taught curriculum all lower sixth formers participate in an extensive enrichment programme which takes place on Wednesday afternoons.

Typical enrichment programme

- Aiming for Oxbridge
- Archery
- AS Film Studies
- Aspirations Programme
- Computer coding
- Dance
- Football/ Netball academy
- Judo
- Mindfulness
- Pathway to Medicine
- Sign language
- Work experience

Foundation Pathways

The Foundation Pathways course offers up to 25 young people with particular needs opportunities to gain pre-entry qualifications and to develop important life skills. The Pathways programme is a specialist provision aimed at those students requiring a more accessible, supportive and structured approach to their post-16 education. Pathways success is a clear demonstration of the school's commitment to a comprehensive and inclusive education, one promoting prosperity for all.



SCHOOL PURPOSE

St Christopher's: A Church of England Academy



Our relationship with God

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.

Our relationship with self

KNOWING WHAT IT IS TO BE FULLY ALIVE

Our relationship with others

LEARNING HOW TO LIVE WELL TOGETHER

Our relationship with learning

SECURING WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

Relationships characterised by shared virtues

FORGIVENESS

FRIENDSHIP

HOPE

JUSTICE

LOVE

PEACE

TRUST

Supporting curriculum aims

Offer a meaningful encounter with Jesus, the Christian faith and practice in a way which is life enhancing

Provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve

Promote the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils

Prepare pupils for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life

PURPOSE, PROVISION, PERFORMANCE

St Christopher's: A Church of England Academy



PURPOSE

FOUNDATION SCRIPTURE
That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers. Psalm 1:3

KEY THEMES

KNOWING WHAT IT IS TO BE FULLY ALIVE

LEARNING HOW TO LIVE WELL TOGETHER

SECURING WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

FORGIVENESS

FRIENDSHIP

HOPE

JUSTICE

LOVE

PEACE

TRUST

CURRICULUM AIMS

Offer a meaningful encounter with Jesus, the Christian faith and practice in a way which is life enhancing

Provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve

Promote the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils

Prepare pupils for the opportunities responsibilities of adult life

PROVISION

CHRISTIAN PRACTICE

Collective worship

Form worship

Year communion

RE

TEACHING APPROACHES

CHALLENGE

EXPLANATION

MODELLING

PRACTICE

FEEDBACK

QUESTIONING

PUPIL ATTITUDES

RESPECTFUL

RESILIENT

REFLECTIVE

READY

STATUTORY DELIVERY

A&D

Ci

Co

D&T

En

Ge

Hi

Ma

MFL

Mu

PE

Sc

PSHEE

RE

COMPONENTS

Lessons

Environment

Events

Routines

Out of lesson

Out of school

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Reading

Oracy

Numeracy

Pupil Leadership

CEIAG

SMSC & British values

PERFORMANCE

ASSESSMENT FIT FOR PURPOSE

Integral to effective T&L

Draws on a wide range of evidence

Promotes a wide and engaging curriculum

Maximises pupil progress

Provides helpful feedback for pupils and parents

Helps identify clear targets for improvement

Links to national standards

Informs future planning and learning to national standards

Uses tests and tasks appropriately to national standards

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

PROGRESS

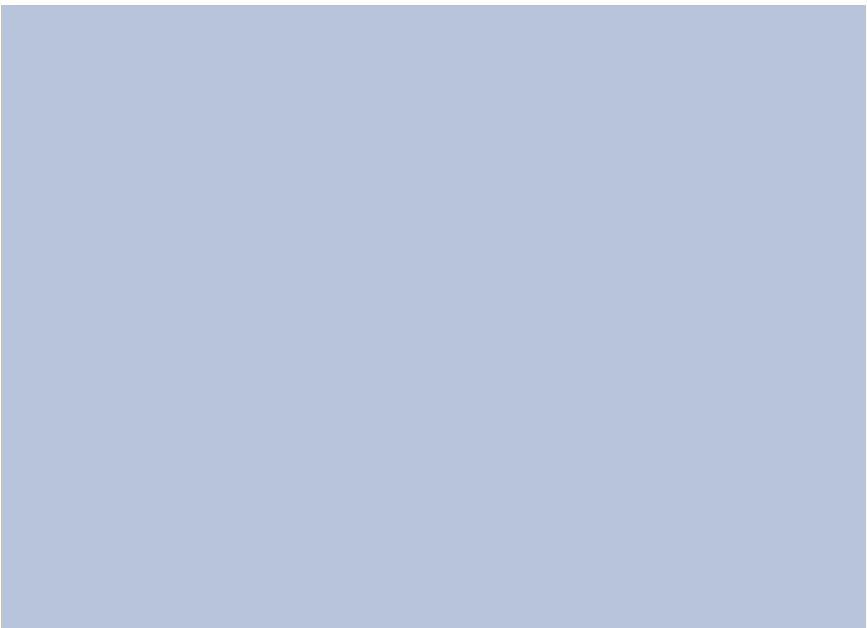
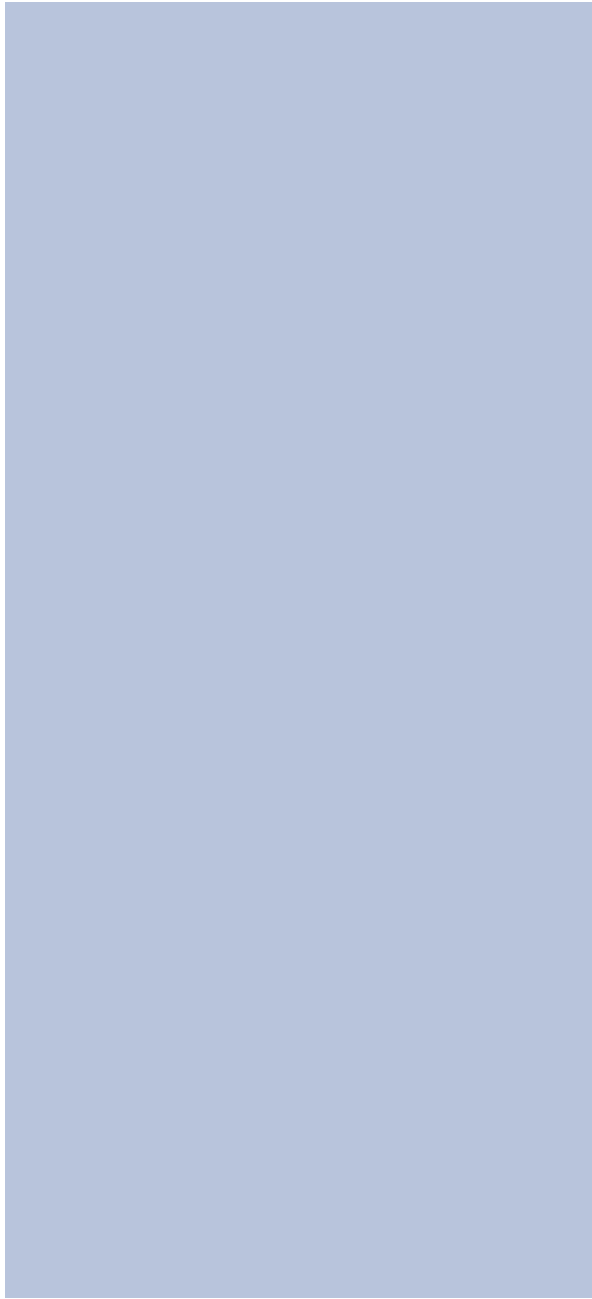
ATTAINMENT

ATTENDANCE

EXCLUSIONS

DESTINATIONS


WELLBEING





Ad Gloriam Dei

To the Glory of God



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