

Aston All Saints Theological Rationale

Summary of the theological rationale of Aston All Saints

Aston All Saints

is a Eucharistic school, placing the presence of God among us at the heart of all we do
creates a school family for every child of God within it
shows the love of God in the way we lived out our daily tasks
sees learning as the treasure in the field awaiting our children
'sings new songs', through our creativity and music

Commentary

The Eucharist is at the heart of the identity of Aston All Saints. It is more than a service, it captures the heart of what we are, and is the basis for all that is outlined below.

Our school has an overt and distinctive Christian identity. It is essential that the Eucharistic celebration is led by children, for children, and that by gathering at this table we express the fellowship of Christ's church and school community at Aston.

On appointment this overt Christian identity, including the Eucharistic nature of the school, is made clear to applicants, on the understanding that the school will remain open and inclusive to them, whatever belief they may bring to life at Aston.

At Aston All Saints we seek to be a genuinely and fully, a parish school. The school prioritises strong links with the parish church and going across to church is held as a special and joyful experience in the spirit of Psalm 122: 'I was glad when they said to me,

"Let us go to the house of the LORD!" (Psalm 122:1)

Attendance at church, is regular and central to our life as a school community The offer of confirmation further integrates children's experience at school with that of the church.

Aston All Saints is a family. The school consciously seeks to create a family environment, through affirming specific facets of the school's identity, such as excellent relationships with parents and the community and, crucially, the approach we take to every child. "The worth of each pupil impels us to work to fulfil their God-given potential" (Church Of England Vision For Education, p.10)

We cultivate the fruit of the spirit ("the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" Galatians 5:22-23a). Through such fruitfulness the school 'lives out' the spirituality expressed at Eucharist. Within this family, the development of staff is a key priority for our school and, gain, this is done in a familial context – everyone chips in with the mutual support required to grow the staff team and encourages one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Aston All Saints sees its welcome as an essential means whereby this family ethos is maintained. The school embodies the same spirit of welcome that is expressed in the Church's service of baptism, wherein we greet the baptised with the words of welcome:

"We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;
we are children of the same heavenly Father;
we welcome you."¹

This sense of fellowship and family, of children of God, informs the ethos of Aston All Saints.

In its expression of love and compassion and sees this as a way of being and growing as a school. We share the Church of England's vision for an education following Christ's example: "Jesus and the love he embodies are at the heart of our faith, offering hope that wrongdoing and sin, suffering, evil and

¹ Common Worship Service of Baptism

death are not the last word about reality. The drama of his life, teaching, death and resurrection, set within the larger story of God's involvement with the whole of creation and history, is fundamental not only to affirming the goodness of life but also to facing and finding ways through whatever goes wrong with ourselves and our communities.." (Church Of England Vision For Education p.10) It is essential to our school that such care be genuine and have integrity, even if this be costly to other priorities – a sacrificial love embodied by Christ, and his words in John 15:13 "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."
Put simply, this sort of care is what we do well as a group of staff.²

Aston All Saints affirms the wonder of the curriculum.

Taking children out and about and providing active and lively learning experiences – such approaches are non-negotiable facets of learning at our school for every class, every term. For us, the story of learning is like the treasure in the field image Christ uses to describe the discovery of God's place and work in the world ('the kingdom'): "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44)

Aston All Saints follows the Church of England's Vision for Education in affirming the wisdom tradition's image of an education that unites "the 'given' and the 'found' – what has been given by the past and what is found in the present through experience, new events, new knowledge and other people" (Church Of England Vision For Education p.9) and within each Eucharist we pray for God to "Our eyes open to see your splendour"³ – a prayer that could be said over all our learning.

Aston All Saints is about educating each child, enabling them to experience 'life in all its fullness' (John10:10) Creativity is the pulse of Aston All Saint's life. We sing new songs to the Lord (Psalm 96:1) and music and art are expressed through activities such as our music curriculum, orchestra, choir and dance provision, all of which contribute to enriching both our expression of life and worship of God in the firm belief that "Creativity is not limited to God: if human beings are in God's image, then they too can be creative" (Church Of England Vision For Education)

Aston All Saint's identity and expectations and hopes for all its pupils can be summed up in the prayer used after communion:

*Lord Jesus Christ,
You put your life into our hands;
now we put our lives into yours.
Take us, renew and remake us.
What we have been is past;
What we shall be, through you,
Still awaits us.
Lead us on.
Take us with you. Amen⁴*

² With thanks to Fr Ian Jennings for plain-speaking this

³ Aston All Saints Eucharistic Welcome

⁴ Aston All Saints Eucharist Prayer After Communion