



# Our Vision, Christian Values and Theological Background

*Character is made in the small moments of our lives.*

*Phillips Brooks*



# Our roots...



We believe Etching Hill is a unique and special place, we are a family. A place where individuals flourish because of the sense of belonging and shared aspirations to live a 'life well lived'.

This ethos is, we believe, deeply Christian and rooted in bible verse John 10:10.



Our approach is one of joy, celebration and thankfulness for what we have and who we are. We believe that there is something potentially wonderful in each and every one of us. This approach is, we believe, deeply Christian and rooted in bible verse Matthew 5:14-16



Trees are part our community and symbolise our aim & moral obligation for all children and adults to flourish as part of Etching Hill, to be equipped to be the best person that they can be, to achieve their potential, to take every opportunity and do so with joy.

Fruit/leaves – the people we are because we have been able to flourish living life to the fullest and shining brightly. Like the leaves & fruit from trees giving back and providing shelter to our community and others



Trunk & branches – our values that help to steer and guide us and keep us strong even when facing challenges

Roots – the Bible verses that our vision and ethos grew from, providing the strong foundations for us to grow together.



At Etching Hill our sense of responsibility goes beyond the academic. Our child-centred, holistic approach to the whole child and to each and every child – our moral compass.



morally

culturally

socially

personally

spiritually

academically

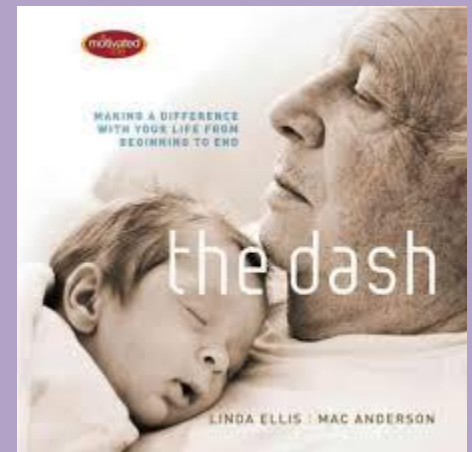
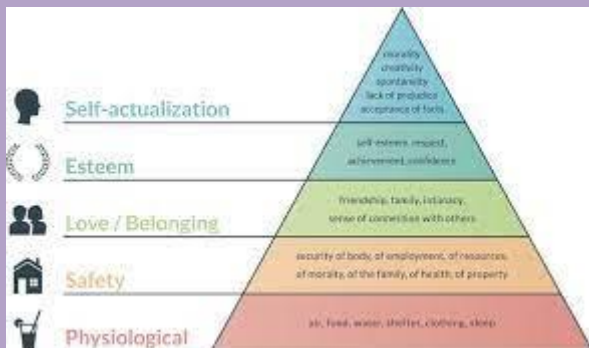
We are also inspired by great scientists, poets, educationalists and leaders.

Mother Teresa

Maslow's – hierarchy of needs

Sir John Jones & Michael Fullan  
– The moral imperative

The Dash by Linda Ellis



## [The Dash Poem \(By Linda Ellis\)](#)

I read of a man who stood to speak  
At the funeral of a friend  
He referred to the dates on the tombstone  
From the beginning...to the end

He noted that first came the date of birth  
And spoke the following date with tears,  
But he said what mattered most of all  
Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time  
That they spent alive on earth.  
And now only those who loved them  
Know what that little line is worth

For it matters not, how much we own,  
The cars...the house...the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love  
And how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.  
Are there things you'd like to change?  
For you never know how much time is left  
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough  
To consider what's true and real  
And always try to understand  
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger  
And show appreciation more  
And love the people in our lives  
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect  
And more often wear a smile,  
Remembering this special dash  
Might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy is being read  
With your life's actions to rehash...  
Would you be proud of the things they say  
About how you spent YOUR dash?



## Our vision:

At the heart of our vision is the belief that we are all God's children. We aim to achieve educational excellence; providing a place where, by working together as a team, everyone can flourish and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually, enjoying and making the most of every opportunity ('life in all its fullness' John 10:10). At Etching Hill, every member of our school community is valued for who they are, encouraged to shine and make a difference to others and the world. (Let your Light Shine Matthew 5:14-16)

# Let Your Light SHINE

## Matthew 5:14-16

*“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine** before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Matthew 5:16 encourages us to nurture our God-given gifts, to shine our light to the world, glorifying the Lord as we do. We believe ‘there is something potentially wonderful in everyone’ and it our responsibility to nurture and inspire our whole school community, to use their God-given gifts to be the best they can be, so that they can let their light shine to the world.



Context of the passage:

Jesus' words come during the sermon on the mount telling us what our role is on Earth. God wants to make the world more pure. He wants us to live a life of abundance and goodness. In previous passages, Jesus says He is the light of the world, that He came to show the world how much God loves everyone – not just the few, not just the rich, not just the religious but everyone.

'You are the light of the world' - this goes beyond a basic school curriculum and is about the development of the whole person adult and child. This is central to all we do and is why our school is such a special place where people feel a sense of belonging and unity.

God wants us to share these values, to foster them in our children so that they flourish and move to their next stage in life with these strong values.

Towns were built on hills for ease of defence. When a town is on higher ground, it is visible to all, especially in the darkness when the lights are on. Similarly, a lamp must be placed above so that the light can shine out further than if it was placed on the ground. Jesus uses these analogies to tell us that it might be tempting to hide our light (our goodness, values, gifts and deeds) for ourselves but we have a responsibility to be visible, to share our knowledge and love for the benefit of others.

## Our Values

The trunk and the branches of our tree...



We decided which would support our VISION and ethos the best to achieve our overall aim of every child living a full life and shining brightly. These values are Christian values deeply rooted in theology.

**LOVE**

**RESPECT**

**COURAGE**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**FORGIVENESS**

**PERSERVERANCE**

# RESPECT

## **Biblical background/Theology:**

Theologically, respect for individuals is rooted in the belief that all are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), with inherent human dignity and rights. For Christians, therefore, respect is not about blind obedience to authority, but needs to be mutual in character. In the letter to the Ephesians, for example, after telling children they must honour their father and mother, Paul tells parents in turn not to provoke their children (Ephesians 6:1-4). Rather than one-way submission, Paul declares that all Christians should 'be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ' (Ephesians 5:21). Respect in this sense entails valuing the other, and treating them with dignity and courtesy, even - and especially - when there are disagreements.

## **Bible stories:**

The Roman Centurion      Jesus goes to the Temple.

## **Associated Bible verse:**

•'Do to others as you would have them do to you.' (Matthew 7: 12)

## **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

This starts with our whole school ethos of every person is equal and our commitment to inclusivity. To encourage respect entails a commitment to safeguarding and the well-being of all. Pupils, staff, governors, and parents are expected to treat one another with dignity and honour, to respect those whose beliefs or ethical choices are different, to handle disagreements with appropriate decorum, to cultivate a respectful attitude to rules and to those in positions of authority, and to uphold British values, democracy, and the rule of law. Respect also involves encouraging pupils to develop self-respect and appropriate self-esteem, avoiding a culture of shame and guilt on the one hand, and arrogance and egocentrism on the other.

## **School video link:**

[Our School Community YouTube](#)

God's great love for us demonstrated by The Cross- [Worship - YouTube](#)

# LOVE

## **Biblical background/Theology**

For Christians, it is the loving-kindness of God towards us that is the basis for our love for one another: as the Bible puts it, we love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). God's love is seen as steadfast, consistent, and patient, and extends to all he has made; and where humans have sinned or fallen short, there is always the opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation (Joel 2:12-13).

As we receive and experience God's love, which is unconditional and for everyone, we can then love others. Christians believe that it is by understanding God's love for us that we truly love others.

## **Biblical Stories:**

Easter -Jesus' death and resurrection were all because God loved us and wanted us to be made right with Him again.

The Good Samaritan, Pharaoh's Daughter & Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi, Jesus heals a paralysed man- Luke 5: 17-26. God shows us that no matter who we are he will always love us- His love is unconditional as that of a parent and child.

## **Associated Bible verse:**

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious, boastful, arrogant, or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. (1 Corinthians 13:4-6)

## **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

Love is an especially important value to us as a school. Love underpins everything that we do. It is very much 'the why' and who we are. Our focus on kindness stems from the value of love, which is evident in our relationships with each other and in our actions to support our community and our world. We see it in our interactions at school and home, feel it when we are together, and experience it through how others act towards us. We can grow and learn together because we know that God loves us.

At EH we develop our value of love through our worship times together; sharing stories of how God and Jesus show love to us; modelling positive interactions and encouragement; supporting those in need, both at school, in our community and in our world; and many other ways.

The value of kindness has been increasingly recognised as important in contemporary society. As the Mental Health Foundation (the UK's leading mental health charity) points out, acts of kindness not only benefit the recipients but also the practitioners, encouraging positive mental health and a sense of belonging, as well as building friendships and community.

Emphasising kindness involves encouraging staff and pupils alike to cultivate compassion, consideration and care for the feelings and needs of others, with a commitment to healthy community living, and ensuring that all feel included and valued. Acts of kindness, especially to those who might otherwise feel excluded, isolated, or alone, are recognised and rewarded, and instances of unkind behaviour or bullying are dealt with constructively, with opportunities for self-reflection, making amends, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Staff and pupils are also encouraged to practice appropriate self-care (kindness to self), with attentiveness to the importance of their own physical and mental well-being, and appropriate support available to those in need.

## **School video link:**

Helping others showing kindness and love for one another [Worship - YouTube](#)

The Good Samaritan and acts of kindness [Worship- YouTube](#)

# COURAGE

## **Biblical background/Theology:**

It has been claimed that the command 'do not be afraid' occurs 365 times in the Bible - one for every day of the year! The words are certainly spoken repeatedly by God (or by an angel) to people throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

Theologically, the biblical injunction not to be afraid is linked to faith in God's presence and power. It is because God is with us that we can have confidence and courage.

In the stories of Jesus' birth alone, for example, the phrase 'do not be afraid' is used four times: to Zechariah (Luke 1:13); to Mary (Luke 1:30); to Joseph (Matthew 1:20); and to the shepherds (Luke 2:10). Courage is a central Christian virtue.

## **Bible Stories**

Moses letting go of the past (Exodus 1-3); David fighting Goliath (1 Samuel 17); Esther risking death to save her people (Esther 4); or Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6):

## **Bible Verse:**

Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

## **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

Courage as a value at EH means creating an environment in which all are supported to step out of their comfort zone, to try new activities and develop new skills, whether academic, sporting, musical, artistic, dramatic, or other. We seek to develop an appropriate understanding of risk and safety; to nurture confidence in speaking, presenting, and performing in public; and promote positive body confidence and self-esteem. Rooted in Christian faith, we want to encourage all pupils to have the courage to express themselves, and to be able to stand up positively and constructively for their beliefs.

Having the courage to say 'no' when everyone else wants you to do something you do not want to do.

Having the courage to stick at a task even when it is difficult.

Having the courage to stand by your beliefs even when people laugh at you.

Having the courage to move on from past mistakes and 'change.'

## **School video link:**

Courage to keep going- Lent focus- [Worship - YouTube](#)

Pray seeking courage- Lent focus- [Worship - YouTube](#)

Have courage knowing God is always with us- The Last Supper gave the disciples the courage to spread the Good News even though Jesus was no longer with them. [Worship- YouTube](#)

# RESPONSIBILITY

## **Biblical background/Theology:**

The Bible teaches that life is a gift from God, and it is our responsibility to use our talents and abilities in the best way we can. God also expects us to take responsibility for our actions—instead of refusing to take responsibility and blaming God (or others) for our mistakes—and He aids those who do (Proverbs 28:13).

Jesus was never passive about his choices and never projected blame, made excuses, or simply waited for someone else to do it. He was never careless. He never waited when action was called for. He was never fearful or anxious with the weight of the responsibility, always trusting in His Father, to fulfil the promises of His ministry. If we are to be like Christ, we, too, must live by these same active, courageous, responsibility-taking character traits. We must sow and watch God provide the harvest.

*'So, then each one of us will give an account of ourselves to God' (Romans 14:12)*

## **Bible Stories**

The Parable of The Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-46)

The parable of the Talents

The story of Saul

## **Bible Verse:**

We are called to be responsible stewards of God's creation: Genesis 1:27 – God said to human beings, 'Fill the earth with people and look after it. Care for all that I have made' (paraphrase). And Jesus commanded his followers to 'care for one another, as I have cared for you' John 13: 34

Peter 4:10

God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God's gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other.

## **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

In school children are taught to Value the contribution that everybody makes to the team. We consider the following questions; How are pupils encouraged to act responsibly in the classroom? How do we act responsibly for our immediate and wider environment? How much responsibility is the school council given to implement the decisions it makes? Are children encouraged to think about where responsibility lies for ethical issues they encounter? Do children understand that attainment in classroom tasks lies not only with the teacher but also with the individual? We provide opportunities for children to reflect on this through our STAR weeks and use of our ELLI characters.

## **School video link:**

Celebrating and helping others to be happy- [Worship - YouTube](#)

# FORGIVENESS

## **Biblical background:**

Forgiveness is fundamental to the character of God. Throughout the Bible, God is described as slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin (Numbers 14:18). Jesus was uncompromising in his command to forgive. Forgive, he said, 'seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:21). In other words, forgive and keep on forgiving without limit. Forgiveness was at the heart of everything he did and is at the heart of the Lord's Prayer. When Jesus declared a person's sins to be forgiven, it often aroused the anger of those who were less willing to forgive than he was and yet a prayer for the forgiveness of his persecutors was on Jesus' lips as he died. Christian preaching has always put forgiveness at the centre. We forgive because we are forgiven. Paul says: 'Be compassionate and kind to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.' (Ephesians 4:32) Forgiveness cannot be given or received unless it is asked for, and the asking must be genuine and from the heart. Too often 'sorry' is said very easily, implying: 'All I need to do is say I'm sorry and everything will be OK.' Real repentance demands that we take what we have done wrong with the utmost seriousness and have a deep desire not to do it again.

## **Biblical Stories:**

The parable of the Unjust Steward Joseph forgave his brother who sold him, Jesus Taught Peter to forgive, Zacchaeus the tax collector. The Prodigal Son

## **Associated Bible verse:**

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:32)

## **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

At Etching Hill, our children are encouraged to forgive each other. Forgiveness is associated with our Relational Care (Behaviour) policy. Children have many chances to reflect on their behaviour and make the right choices. Poor behaviour choices are always forgiven without a grudge, and we enjoy a 'new beginning.' Our restorative approach to dealing with any conflict draws on our Christian value of forgiveness.

Children have an understanding that forgiveness is at the centre of Christian preaching. They make good behaviour choices, but when disagreements do occur, they are quickly resolved with a sincere apology and forgiveness.

We inclusive ethos means that we are always promoting the fact that everyone matters, no one is more important than anyone else, that we should take care of others, forgive one another, use our voice and hands for kindness, think about others, listen to their thoughts and ideas, and stand in some else's shoes.

## **School video link:**

Forgive others as God forgives us- The Prodigal Son [Worship- YouTube](#)

Living a Good life- what does this mean? Forgiveness is part of living a good life [Worship - YouTube](#)

# PERSERVERANCE

## Perseverance

**Biblical background:** Jesus frequently encouraged his disciples to 'endure patiently' the difficulties and obstacles they encountered and to persevere in the face of adversity. He himself trusted in God even when his enemies tried to stop his work and plotted his death. Endurance and perseverance are only possible where there is hope and that hope is based on the enduring nature of God's love and faithfulness. Even Jesus, for all his strength and ability to endure, looked to his disciples to help and sustain him by watching and praying with him (Matthew 26).

### **Bible stories:**

Mary and Joseph travelling to Egypt     Jeremiah perseveres.  
Noah and the Ark     Peter walking on the water (Matthew 14: 22-33)

### **Associated Bible verse:**

"But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." 2 Chronicles 15:7

### **In practice/ How do we live this out in school?**

Perseverance at EH means cultivating an environment in which pupils and staff are encouraged to keep going in the face of challenges, develop resilience, and the character to overcome setbacks. In academic subjects and in sport, art, music and drama, hard work and "stick-ability" are seen as important, and in all these areas we seek to reward effort and attitude, as well as achievement. We also seek to nurture perseverance and longevity in matters of faith and in how we approach relationships: in faith, by seeking to establish habits and patterns of prayer and worship that will endure into adulthood; and in relationships, to work at communication and reconciliation.

### **School video link:**

Patience- good things come to those who wait [Worship - YouTube](#)