

Porter Croft Theological Rationale 2019

Summary of the theological rationale of Porter Croft

- ‘Together we are Porter Croft’: Koinonia affirms individuality and togetherness
- The love of God, and given by God, is translated into compassion and justice
- diversity is celebrated, building a culture of tolerance and respect
- we strive to ensure each child achieves their full potential
- an enriched and thankful curriculum leads us into depth and wisdom

Commentary

Koinonia

‘Together we are Porter Croft’

Porter Croft is a place of ‘koinonia’, that unique togetherness seen within the earliest Christian community, where the depth of relationship with God results in practical living-well together (Acts 2:42–47).

“Living before God and living with and for others go together in Jesus. He embodies the centrality of relationships in love, compassion, generosity, truth-telling, forgiveness, and gathering a community” (Church of England Vision for Education p.11)

In a way that echoes the symbol of the church as the body of Christ, with each part unique in itself but also essentially one with the whole body (1 Corinthians 12:12ff), at Porter Croft every child and adults is held to be a unique child of God and have an essential role in that koinonia.

The strength of relationships within the school demonstrates, a sense of belonging; helping children to understand their part in a wider caring community, while ensuring all the children know they are valued as individuals. With over 20 different languages spoken and children coming from different countries all around the world, we nurture our children as ‘God’s Children’ and celebrate individual differences on a daily basis.

Love One Another

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” John 13:34

At Porter Croft we translate the love that God has for, and has given to, humanity into practical action. This is seen in the way we value compassion and justice and put them at the heart of our living well together.

We see in compassion something stronger that goes beyond simple care or thoughtfulness, involving our duty to put ourselves in another’s shoes and try thinking and feeling as they are thinking and feeling. Such empathy is vital in our treatment of children who may present challenge or feel excluded or just be having a bad day!

Our school also sees the outworking of love in the justice of our treatment of one another and regard for the world beyond the school. Our rules and rewards are directed to this end, and the behaviour policy is rooted in restorative practice with an emphasis on forgiveness and reconciliation.

Our approach echoes the Church of England’s Vision for a school, namely that “The community of his followers is bound together in a covenant that commits us to love God and be good neighbours to all, in line with his Jewish scriptures that Jesus taught: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might’ and ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18; see Matthew 7:12, 22:36-40; Luke 10:27).” (p.11)

Diversity

We are positive and celebratory about our diversity. Ours is a vision akin to the Biblical image of a heavenly celebration of “every race, tribe, nation, and language” (Revelation 7:9) With tolerance and enthusiasm, we learn about our own beliefs as well as those of others. In this way we can appreciate what makes us similar as well as what makes us different.

Respect underpins this approach. We should always show others proper respect at all times. We remember to ‘respect ourselves’, ‘respect each other’ and ‘respect our environment’ at all times. At Porter Croft we affirm the Church of England Vision that “The worth of each child and adult 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” and we see this as only achieved when we also affirm that “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” (p10). For us the key to togetherness is the celebration of diversity and individuality that builds towards that culture of tolerance, respect and affirmation.

Achievement

“We aim to deliver excellence in education and want the very best outcomes for children and young people so that they can achieve their fullest potential” (Church of England Vision for Education p.3)

At Porter Croft we strive to ensure each child achieves their full God given potential. Within this culture we also emphasise the place of humility, encouraging each child to recognise and be grateful for the gifts we have and are thankful for them. ‘Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire.’ (St Catherine of Siena).

Quality and Enrichment

To foster the highest achievement we seek to provide an enriched curriculum that is full of life and vibrancy. Our approach to the world is one of thankfulness, celebrating God’s gifts to us. In such a context we will always aspire for depth in our learning, looking through the windows, mirrors and doors of depth in life, finding in this something of the wisdom with which God has imbued life and the world.

The wisdom tradition of the Old Testament encourages this: “How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver!” (Proverb 16:16) and calls people to recognise this depth and way of wisdom within life, as the key to good living. We aim for depth like that.

At Porter Croft “there is confidence that the pursuit of wisdom, knowledge and skills is consistent with how God has shaped the world and ourselves” (Church of England Vision for Education p.8)

Thankful striving after this wisdom at Porter Croft is what makes the school a place of joy.