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**Report on the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of the school**

 **throughout the COVID19 pandemic.**

The COVID19 pandemic has resulted in our country having to navigate it’s way through a period of desperate uncertainty and unprecedented restrictions. There is no aspect of society that has managed to escape the impact of this pandemic. The role of our school has always been to support our school community in any way we can, very much basing this on the individual needs of the members of our community. The Christian distinctiveness of our school has been evident at all stages of these extraordinary times and it is an integral part of our recovery.

After the first Lockdown when some children within certain year groups were allowed to return to school we embarked upon creating and implementing a curriculum designed to support a programme of recovery. Here our Christian ethos and values were central to all that followed. Our recovery curriculum was based upon the story of Noah’s Ark (the first ever Lockdown). This story brought with it opportunities to reflect and acknowledge the difficulties we and others have experienced during such difficult times. It also brought with it a message of hope and God’s promise made out of love.

Although not all children were able to return to school at this time, the messages learned within this topic left a worthy legacy not only displayed for all to see in the school hall but also (more importantly) through the attitudes and values displayed by the children. They made links with the story of Noah, they supported and helped each other, they thought about the choices they made and they thought about the impact their actions would have on others.

When the second Lockdown took place it was with heavy hearts that school was closed again to some children. However we were determined to stick to our mantra and support all members of our community in anyway we could. Home learning topics included RE lessons and opportunities to reflect on the children’s own spiritual development. As we understood that this second Lockdown had been even more challenging than the first in terms of expectations and workload not only for children but for parents as well, we believed that it was vital to plan and create a recovery curriculum which focussed specifically on mental well-being and friendship. We understood that in order to facilitate children’s learning these two vital aspects needed to be addressed first.

The importance of team building is clearly understood and the very first activities the children undertook on their return to school, had team-biulding at the for front. The children responded very well to this and the values they needed to be successful were identified and discussed. The values they needed were directly linked to our school rules which embedded the importance of respecting each other. This was especially evident when the children were put into mixed aged pairs and threes. KS2 unanimously did a super job of looking after their younger partners. Younger children who felt nervous and unsure were taken such good care of by their older partners that they asked each other to play together at break time too. This enjoyment of mixing between classes appears to be a long lasting legacy of the activities in the recovery curriculum.

During their first week back at school Collective worship for both classes began again much to the enthusiasm of the children. They have been really enjoying the Miracle Bible stories which is a series leading them all the way to Easter. During the first week with everyone back the children listened to a story all about Zaccheus, a man without friends. During the collective worship the children were asked to suggest why Zaccheus was so surprized when Jesus stopped under the tree he was in. Three children volunteered three different answers which reflected a very good level of understanding.

Child 1 (year 3) – Suggested that maybe he was surprised because he felt guilty knowing that he had done something wrong.

Child 2 (year 2) – Suggested that he was surprised because he had never had someone want to come to his house to see him before.

Child 3 (year 2 with SEND) – Suggested that maybe he was so surprised because a celebrity had stopped and wanted to talk to him.

This last suggestion showed that the child understood the impact of Jesus ministry on Earth and he could link it to a modern day example in terms of the role of celebrities in society today.

Children of all ages contributed to the collective worship and it was completed by highlighting an example of a child who had offered wonderful friendship to others and had been given a special friendship award. The link between the ultimate example of Jesus as a perfect friend and the choices we make was made explicit. This link is often highlighted throughout the school day when children show kindness and friendship towards each other we discuss how Jesus would feel.

As with all significant developments in school, we relied upon our Christian distinctiveness and values to form the foundations and the life blood of all parts of our second recovery topic.