

Dear Friends and Colleagues -

In church this week, the Bible readings explored the idea of faith – the faith of the bleeding woman who touched the hem of Jesus’ clothes (Matthew 9.21), the faith St Paul talks about in his letter to the Romans (Romans 4), the faith of the father whose daughter had just died (Matthew 9.18).

I find faith a tricky concept. Too often, people talk about faith as though it were a fixed and immovable entity – once you have it, that’s it, everything will be fine. My own experience is a little different: for me, faith is something that is always on the move, like the tides of the sea. Sometimes it feels a little easier, sometimes a little harder.

In many Christian writings, faith is inextricably linked with hope – a confidence in the things that are not yet, a trust in what is unseen. However, I’m not sure faith and hope are necessarily the same thing. The great American poet, Mary Oliver, puts it like this:

“I would speak here of the darkness of the world, and the light of———. But I don’t know what to call it. Maybe hope. Maybe faith, but not a shaped faith—only, say, a gesture, or a continuum of gestures. But probably it is closer to hope, that is more active, and far messier than faith must be. Faith, as I imagine it, is tensile, and cool, and has no need of words. Hope, I know, is a fighter and a screamer.”

As I visit many of our schools this term, I realise how much fighting and screaming is going on – fighting for the resources and support to enable every pupil to access school and flourish, screaming about the increasing challenges faced by school leaders and staff. I try hard to focus on the hope that lies in the depths of this fighting and screaming: a hope that things can be other than they are, and that continued advocacy and collaboration will lead to smoother paths for everyone.

Rooted in our vision to CARE, we are alongside you in this messy, active pursuit of the flourishing of all. We hold you in our thoughts every day and we are always here for you when solutions feel far off. Thank you for everything you do, day in and day out, to give hope a chance to bloom.

Gillian Georgiou
RE & SIAMS Advisor



Upcoming Courses & Events

Date	Time	Course		Book Here
16/06/2026	16:00-18:00	How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?	Online	BOOK
23/06/2026	10:00 - 12:00	Bishop Visitor Training	Face to face	BOOK
24/06/2026	10:00 - 12:00	Bishop Visitor Training	Face to face	BOOK
25/06/2026	16:00-18:00	Monitoring and Evaluating the Spiritual Life of the School	Online	BOOK
10/07/2026	9:30-12:30	SEF writing Workshop	Face to face	BOOK

Fundamental British Values and Church School Values

Teaching Fundamental British Values (FBV) remains a statutory expectation, and in a church school context, leaders must ensure these are not only embedded but clearly and explicitly taught. Ofsted will look closely at how well pupils — particularly at Key Stage 2 — develop an age-appropriate understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance. These concepts must not be left to chance; they should be deliberately planned for, explicitly named, and regularly revisited so that pupils know them securely and can articulate them with increasing confidence and detail as they progress through the school.

Leaders should ensure that pupils are able to talk about FBV in language appropriate to their age and stage, demonstrating not only recognition but understanding of how these values apply in their own lives. Planned opportunities should be evident within PSHE, as well as across the wider curriculum — including history, RE, English, and may also be referenced in collective worship — where pupils can see these values modelled, explored, and applied in meaningful contexts.

Within a church school, it is equally important that distinctively Christian values are taught clearly and confidently, rooted in the school's vision. While there are often natural links between Christian values and FBV, these connections should be made explicit rather than assumed. Leaders should support pupils in understanding both sets of values, ensuring they can distinguish and articulate them, while also recognising how they complement one another in shaping responsible, thoughtful citizens.

Practical approaches, such as prominent whole-school displays of both Fundamental British Values and the school's Christian values, enable frequent reference and reinforcement by staff and pupils. Leaders and teachers should actively draw attention to these values in daily interactions, helping pupils to understand that Christian values arise from the school's vision, while Fundamental British Values reflect what it means to live well together in modern Britain.

Resources such as Picture News can also be particularly useful within collective worship and classroom discussion, as they provide current, real-world contexts that help pupils explore and make meaningful links between Fundamental British Values and the school's Christian values