

**The Ellis Hemingfield Theological Rationale**

**Summary of the theological rationale of the Ellis. ‘Be the best you can be’**

The Ellis Hemingfield

* seeks the fullness of life from life in its fullness
* encourages and demonstrates wisdom and the making of right choices
* celebrates the ‘gold’ that is the best in learning and living
* seeks to see the image of God in the character of the child
* seeks to enable all to drink from their own wells of resourcing

**Commentary**

For The Ellis Hemingfield, ‘life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10) is about the fullest life a child can experience. The Ellis aims to enable each child to realise their full potential, educating for life in all its fullness.

The Ellis has ambitious, aims and big ideas inspired by the knowledge our teaching is to the glory of God and for learners who can be transformed ‘from glory to glory’ (2 Corinthians 3:18). ‘God’s glory is an overflow of the divine life, holiness and love’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.12 ) that reaches out to classrooms and the school environment.

One consequence of this is the place of creativity in the life of the school: ‘if human beings are in God’s image, then they too can be creative’ (*Church of England Vision for Education, p.12).*

The Ellis encourages the making of right choices. The school reflects the parable of two roads, where the narrower and more difficult choice may be the one that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14).

To support this, much emphasis is placed on the importance of good learning behaviours. Children are encouraged to be and become ready to learn.

In a manner reflecting the wisdom literature and the puzzling over life in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the school also promotes the inquisitiveness of thinking minds – a wisdom of Solomon at Hemingfield.

When it sees a cause for celebrating, the Ellis celebrates. The school uses the language of ‘gold’ to develop a sense of precious learning behaviours and activities.

Like the Psalmists’ description of the teachings and decisions of God as ‘more desirable than the finest gold; they are sweeter than the purest honey’ (Psalm 19:10), the school symbolises the precious nature of goodness and quality in education.

 Just as the Old Testament speaks of the refining of gold - ‘Fire tests gold and silver; a person's reputation can also be tested’ (Proverbs 27:21) - the school sees itself as part of the production of ‘the best you can be’. In this way the school affirms ‘the essential importance to human worth of fellow human beings, human community and the whole created world of which we are part.’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.8)

The school affirms that ‘the ultimate worth of each person is grounded in being created in the image of God and in God’s love and compassion for each’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.9) and, on this basis, Ellis seeks to develop the character of its children and to promote positive self-esteem. Thus, the school promotes education for community and living well together. The Ellis prioritises key values of listening and honesty, recognising that the former involves more than just hearing the sound of the voice (Mark 4:23) and the latter needs to be life-enhancing in its attitude towards others (Psalm 25:21; Proverbs 11:4). The school also encourages children to be ‘guided by honesty’ (Proverbs 11:3); recognises that ‘Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.11); and that ‘he paid special attention to those who are often disadvantaged, excluded, despised or feared’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.11). The Ellis is an inclusive school and seeks to inscribe its inclusivity into the very language it uses (e.g. ‘Time out’ is ‘think time’).

The Ellis uses the image of the well, a location and symbol richly deployed across the Bible, as when life is affirmed as drawing on ‘the wells of salvation’ (Isaiah 12:3) to nurture the understanding that in teaching and sharing with others, we can only give to others from what we already have about and within us. As such, the school understands that we become a blessing to one another.

In this spirit the school promotes self confidence and independence among its learners.

‘*Blessing* is a central biblical activity, forming what might be called a dynamic ecology of blessing: God blesses human beings and creation; creation and human beings can bless God; humans can bless each other; and the dynamic crosses generations and peoples’ (*Church of England Vision for Education*, p.12).

The school also recognises the need to ensure our own ‘wells’ can support us. As such the school prioritises wellness and well-being and seeks to ensure a safe and happy environment for all learners and staff.