

# DBE Schools Bulletin

March 2021

Being deeply Christian and for the common good,  
our schools will be communities which are:

**LOVING**  
in relationships

**AMBITIOUS**  
in aspirations

**BOLD**  
in actions



**Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth: Shall you know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.**

**Isaiah 43:18-19**

*A time not to look back and dwell on the past but to spring forward, whatever hardship we have endured, we can leave that behind. God has something new in store for us, He will go before us and show the way. As springtime comes for us, we will be ready to blossom.*

## Spring is in the air

The start of March signals the first signs that spring is on its way, sunny crisp mornings, bird song, blankets of daffodils at the roadside, longer days and lighter evenings all indicate a change in our season and also our mood. It also reminds us that Easter is coming. Spring is probably my favourite season as we look to move out of the dark and cold of winter. The sense of hope and expectation that spring brings is probably even more pertinent this year as it coincides with our gradual easing of the restrictions and a move over the coming months to a return to a level of normality once again. Preparations are underway for welcoming all pupils back to our schools from the 8<sup>th</sup> March and a return of whole class teaching in the classroom and the formation of bubbles once again.

This month's bulletin features some examples of how our schools and churches have been working together during the pandemic, including through lockdown. Sharing their stories and experiences may provide some inspiration and ideas for others. Another popular feature is the news from our schools, thank you for sending in your stories and sharing what your school and pupils have been getting up to. It would be great to be able to share more of your good news stories in our April bulletin.

Finally, I wanted to highlight an invitation to join us to pray for our schools and their communities across the Diocese. Jen McIlveen will be leading a prayer time via Zoom every Tuesday morning between 8am and 8:30am. More details can be found on page 6.

## Church School Links During & After Lockdown

### Astbury St Mary's C of E Primary



Children at Astbury enjoyed worship with Revd. Naylor and Wilf. Wilf was very naughty and was snaffling all the sweets in particular, he liked the love hearts. At Astbury School this year we have been exploring our school Bible verse, 'walk in love as Christ loves you' from Ephesians five verse two. As Wilf had been trying to eat the

love hearts, Revd. Naylor read a story to the children about love that showed how God loves us. She encouraged the children and staff to think about how we can feel love in our hearts but also, we can love with our brains, to love is a decision that we make. As she loves Wilf, she could not let him eat the sweets even though he wanted to. One of the reception children prayed for love to be in the world and worship ended with the playing of the school birthday song for Revd. Naylor – just played on the piano by one of the children in year five as no singing allowed!

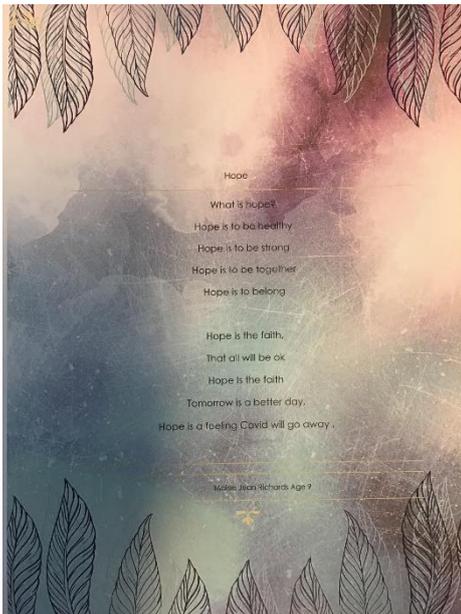


### Bridgemere C of E Primary School

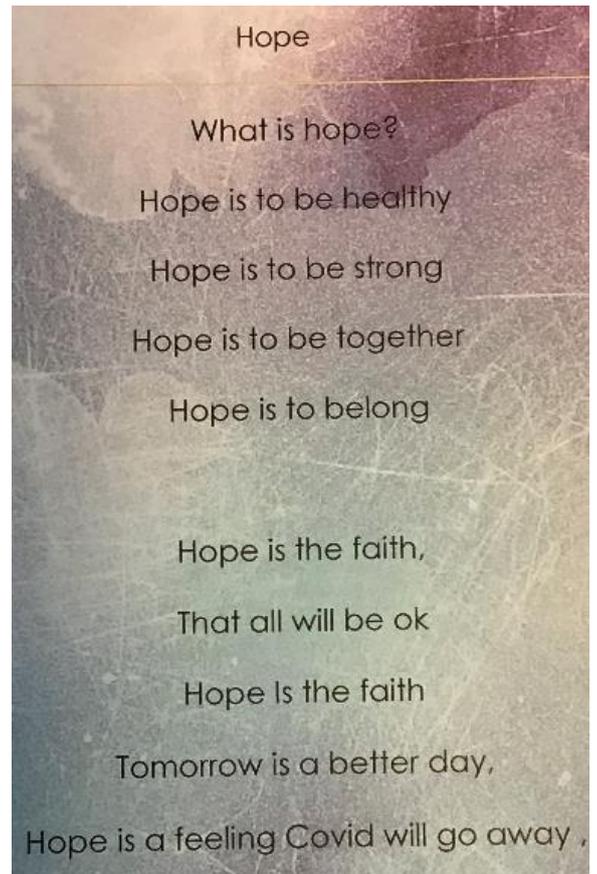


During this lockdown we have endeavoured to bring the community together by setting up our 'Hope Tree'. All children, families, staff, and Governors have written their hopes for 2021 to attach to the tree, we felt as a school if we could not be together in person, we could be in spirit by offering these hopes to God.

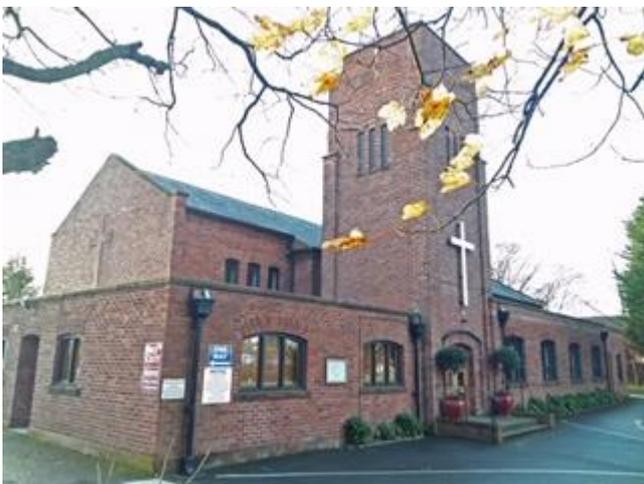
The Christian theme of hope has guided us through this half term and been a focus of our daily worship.



Here is a poem that one of our Year 5 children wrote after reflection. We have also welcomed our new vicar Reverend Alison Fulford to the parish who has also joined us virtually in worship.



**Ellesmere Port C of E College & Christ Church C of E Primary School**



A huge shout out to Ellesmere Port Parish for all they have done for our school community in Ellesmere Port during the pandemic from The Ellesmere Port Church of England College, and Christ Church CE Primary School.

They have held the schools in their prayers and kept in touch with our communities throughout this very difficult time.

At Christmas we were overwhelmed with their generous gifts of food hampers, clothes, and toys for our disadvantaged families. As we handed over these packages to our parent's tears were shed, the presents were very much appreciated.



Throughout the pandemic both Rev Gordon and Rev Gill have continued to provide spiritual support for children, staff, and families. At Christ Church we look forward to our weekly Monday Zoom worship with them – it is a wonderful way to start the week, in worship together.

At EPC daily reflection during academic review and weekly staff prayers are led and inspired by Rev Gordon and his team. It is a regular time for the whole college to stop, reflect and pray together during what has been a difficult time for many in our community.

### **Mossley C of E Primary School**

#### **'They shall have life, life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)**



Our Christian value for this half term is 'peace,' which has been valuable to our children and staff during this lockdown period. We have strong links with our local Congleton Parish, and they have provided weekly Worship videos throughout this school year. At Mossley, we are always thinking about the wellbeing of our children, families, and staff. Therefore, learning about 'inner peace' during Worship has been vital. The Congleton Parish read us the story of when Jesus calms the storm and how we can calm ourselves down by talking to someone or by listening to calming music and having a moment of peace.

In our classrooms, we created 'peace' displays to explain how we have inner peace or how we are peacemakers in our school, community and in our world.

### **St Bridget's C of E Primary School**

Despite the strange times that we have all found ourselves in over the past 12 months, St. Bridget's Parish church and St. Bridget's school have worked hard to continue forging links. The parish was appointing and awaiting their new incumbent through the first half of 2020, but church members worked hard to ensure that the children of the school did not feel a void. Church members prayed for the school and all its children, staff, and families. A farewell video was produced for the Year 6 children in July with many familiar faces from church passing on their touching messages. Church members have led assemblies over Google Meets and have been a source of support to staff. In November, the long-awaited new Rector arrived...we were thrilled to welcome Alex Williams and I don't think she has had a minute to breathe since!

Since her arrival, she has found innovative new ways to connect with the children in school whilst also supporting the vital work that had gone on earlier in the difficult year that was 2020. In December, Alex attended our socially distanced Staff Prayers and Briefings, she also co led a virtual Christingle service with the whole school over Google Meets.

Alex also devised a project that every member of our school, the congregation and the local community could feel part of. Everybody was asked to produce and decorate an angel. This multitude of angels were then displayed in church and people of all ages were welcomed to walk through the church safely to behold the vision. I think Alex's words were: ***"If we can't fill the church with people, we will fill it with angels."*** These angels were distributed amongst the parish...offering a message of peace, hope and love in what seems to be another challenging time.

Throughout January, Reverend Alex has made weekly assembly videos for our children, she has linked these to our current topic of Social Justice: Refugees, whilst also reassuring the children through prayer, scripture, music, storytelling and film clips...everybody has really enjoyed them and they have been a great source of comfort. Alex and other church members have attended some of the daily meetings that each year group shares via Google Meets, leading prayer but also just "being there" and getting to know the children.

So, as we look to Ash Wednesday, Lent and then on to Easter, we will continue to strengthen these bonds...and plans are well underway for our first virtual Easter Experience! This is a much-loved event when our children go over to the church as a year group and move through 5 different stations exploring scripture and prayer brought alive by members of the church. As that is impossible this year, work has begun on a virtual format necessity breeds invention.

Ultimately, we feel blessed as a school to have such support, love and wisdom from our church...it has certainly helped us through some dark times.

Faith, hope and love.

## Tarporley C of E Primary School



Some of our Critical Worker Yr6 children who are in school carried out a wonderful takeover of our celebration worship this week.

You can find the kids takeover worship by clicking [here](#).

## Shocklach Oviatt C of E Primary School

The children have been enjoying special times of togetherness with whole school worships on Zoom. Reverend Tim, Reverend Norma and Barney also continue to delight and inspire the children each week.

A particular highlight was when one of the youngest children, in a beautiful white dress, spontaneously danced to 'This little light of mine'. It brought smiles to everyone's face.

This term everyone has been looking at how they can show friendship to others and the importance of human connection especially when so many feel isolated and vulnerable.



Some of Charlie Mackesy's quotes and illustrations have been shared from his much-loved book, 'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse'. When Charlie Mackesy is interviewed, he is often asked how he came up with the words and his reply is that it always starts with a feeling. He wanted the pictures to be comforting and felt nature is a very soothing environment. He grew up surrounded by farmland (very similar to Shocklach) and this naturally instilled in him a deep love and appreciation of wildlife. There is often an innocence and openness about animals. In the midst of everything we are facing now, the uncertainty and missing friends and being together at school. It has been discussed that it is more important than ever to reach out and be kind and loving to others.



The children have enjoyed hearing about how Mrs Shepherd's cat, Vincent has been writing to her daughter overseas to spread a little humour, happiness, and joy. This has inspired many children to write in the role of their pets and send messages of hope and kindness to family and friends.

Shocklach pupils have also loved seeing photos of church warden, Mrs Peel's new puppy, Zeus exploring the grounds of St Edith's. Everyone knows that he will become firm friends with Ronnie the school dog. Everyone is so looking forward to Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March when they will finally all be back together. It will be lovely to start planning a visit to church too.



## Free YLA Online Events in March



Free twilight workshops are being run for any schools that would like to find out more about running the Young Leaders Award and how it can support pupils, particularly at this difficult time. The **Introduction to Character Education** sessions have input from Dr Tom

Harrison, Director of Education at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues.

Please click [here](#) to access the schedule of events for March. To book a place, please visit their website by clicking [here](#).

## Fairtrade Fortnight



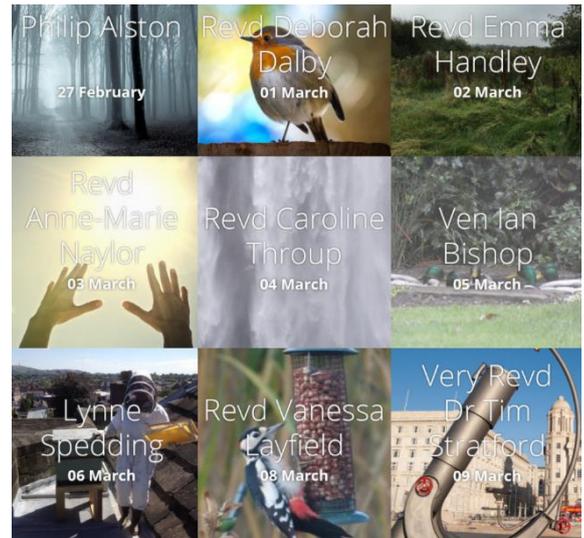
[Fairtrade Fortnight](#) is taking place this year from 22 February to 7 March. This year's campaign will provide young people with the opportunity to **think** about how the climate crisis affects farmers overseas, **learn** how choosing Fairtrade can make a difference, and **act** to make the world a better place. Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms for farmers and workers in the developing world.

To celebrate, the Fairtrade Foundation is hosting an exciting online festival between 22 February and 7 March. Schools and individuals are invited to come along for film screenings, Fairtrade cookalongs, teacher training sessions, and an inspiring Youth Exhibition to celebrate the power we all have to make a difference in the world. Find out more by visiting the [Fairtrade website](#).



## A gentle Lenten journey for 2021

This Lent the Diocese of Chester, led by the diocesan Environment Forum, is offering the invitation to join in with a Lenten journey. Leading the way are 40 individuals from around our diocese who will each reflect on God's word and God's world. They will delve into scripture and share inspiring personal stories about the small ways in which they are moved to cherish the gift of life. The journey also incorporates 7 mini challenges that will stretch you to live your life differently for the season of Lent (and beyond). So, instead of *giving up* something for Lent, why not try *taking up* one or all of these mini challenges. [Diocese of Chester | Lent \(anglican.org\)](http://Diocese of Chester | Lent (anglican.org))



## Springs Dance Company



With Covid safety at the forefront, Springs Dance Company has created for schools a new, interactive performance workshop called PARABLE. They provide primary schools with visually exciting and imaginative ways to boost children's engagement with RE. Adventurous, interactive and exciting, children will encounter and overcome creative challenges, accomplish tasks and influence the outcome of the performance, whilst absorbed in a vibrant world of professional movement, dance and theatre. The project will be available from the Summer term. Please click [here](#) for full details.

**PARABLE**  
**INTERACTIVE**  
Performance Workshop

## Tales from the Miracle Book



To celebrate pupils return to school ***Tales from the Miracle Book*** are offering Primary Schools access to over 30 films on RE plus all the teaching worksheet resources for Key Stages 1&2 covering Easter, Christmas, Anti-bullying and the life of Jesus - and soon a Creation series (about to be filmed) for **half price until the 3rd March!**

*Tales from the Miracle Book* has been awarded the Understanding Christianity National Accreditation awarded to quality teaching of Christianity in RE. Please click [here](#) to download a **FREE SAMPLE** from the tales website, if you wish to subscribe before March 3<sup>rd</sup>, please click [here](#) and enter **HALFPRICE** into the coupon code.

## Family of Schools' CPD Programme 2021

Due to the on-going pandemic and local lockdown measures, our CPD programme will need to continue to be delivered on-line for at least the beginning of the spring term. Where training is best delivered as a 'face to face' meeting, these will be postponed and rescheduled for later in the school year. We hope to be able to resume our meetings as soon as possible but, in the meantime, we would like you to be aware of changes to our programme as follows:

### March & April 2021 Courses

DATE	COURSE	STATUS
02/03/21	<a href="#">Headteacher Wellbeing Session for Governors</a>	ON-LINE
03/03/21	<a href="#">'Goodness &amp; Mercy' - RSHE For Church of England Schools **1.30pm-3pm**</a>	ON-LINE
03/03/21	<a href="#">'Goodness &amp; Mercy' - RSHE For Church of England Schools**4pm-5.30pm**</a>	ON-LINE
10/03/21	<a href="#">Governor Training &amp; Employment &amp; Staffing in a VA School Academy</a>	ON-LINE
15/03/21	<a href="#">Headteacher Wellbeing Session for Governors &amp; Headteachers</a>	ON-LINE
16/03/21	<a href="#">Preparing for SIAMS - An Inspector's Eye View</a>	ON-LINE
17/03/21	<a href="#">Vision Ambassadors &amp; A Pupil Conference</a>	ON-LINE
18/03/21	<a href="#">Headteacher Ofsted Workshop - Led by Eileen Mulgrew, Senior Regional HMI – 10am Session</a>	ON-LINE
18/03/21	<a href="#">Headteacher Ofsted Workshop – 11.30am Session</a>	ON-LINE
18/03/21	<a href="#">New Headteachers - Catch Up &amp; Networking Event</a>	ON-LINE
23/03/21	<a href="#">Worship in a Church School-Worship Warriors</a>	ON-LINE
24/03/21	<a href="#">RQT Development Programme 2020-21</a>	ON-LINE
24/03/21	<a href="#">Chairs' Clinic &amp; Networking Group</a>	ON-LINE
21/04/21	<a href="#">Understanding Christianity &amp; the Diocesan Syllabus</a>	ON-LINE
23/04/21	<a href="#">Heads Chairs &amp; Incumbents Briefing</a>	ON-LINE
27/04/21	<a href="#">Religious Education &amp; the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule</a>	ON-LINE
28/04/21	<a href="#">Fresh Voices -Young People &amp; Participation</a>	ON-LINE
29/04/21	<a href="#">Chairs' Clinic &amp; Networking Group</a>	ON-LINE

## Headteacher Cluster Meetings

CLUSTER GROUP	DATE	TIME
<b>SPRING &amp; SUMMER TERM DATES 2021</b>		
Chester HTs	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> April	10am-12pm
Macclesfield HTs	Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> May	10am-12pm
Nantwich/Congleton HTS	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> March Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> June	1.30pm -3.30pm 10am -12pm
Northwich HTs	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	1.30pm -3.30pm
Rural Chester HTs	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> March Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> June	1.30pm -3.30pm 1.30pm -3.30pm
Stockport/Tameside HTs	Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> May <b>*NEW DATE &amp; TIME*</b>	10am -12pm
Trafford HTs	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March <b>*NEW DATE*</b> Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> June	10am -12pm 10am -12pm
Warrington HTs	Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	10am -12noon
Wirral HTs	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> April	10am -12noon

Joining instructions will be sent out nearer the meeting date. For any queries, please contact [sandra.reynolds@chester.anglican.org](mailto:sandra.reynolds@chester.anglican.org)

## DBE Officer New Contact Details

Please note new contact telephone numbers for members of the DBE team have been added to enable schools to contact officers by phone as well as e-mail during this period.

<a href="mailto:chris.penn@chester.anglican.org">chris.penn@chester.anglican.org</a>	Director of Education	07540 722667
<a href="mailto:sue.noakes@chester.anglican.org">sue.noakes@chester.anglican.org</a>	Deputy Director of Education	07540 722668
<a href="mailto:mark.whitehill@chester.anglican.org">mark.whitehill@chester.anglican.org</a>	School Effectiveness Officer	07540 722669
<a href="mailto:jenny.mcilveen@chester.anglican.org">jenny.mcilveen@chester.anglican.org</a>	Christian Character & CPD Officer	07581 245812
<a href="mailto:simon.geddes@chester.anglican.org">simon.geddes@chester.anglican.org</a>	Buildings & Finance Officer	07564 901986
<a href="mailto:sandra.jones@chester.anglican.org">sandra.jones@chester.anglican.org</a>	School Assets Administrator	07549 109589
<a href="mailto:charlotte.somers@chester.anglican.org">charlotte.somers@chester.anglican.org</a>	Director's PA & Administrator	07549 109578
<a href="mailto:sandra.reynolds@chester.anglican.org">sandra.reynolds@chester.anglican.org</a>	Governance & Administrator	07549 109590

## News from Schools

### Bollington St John's C of E Primary School

The children at both homes and school enjoyed creating a menu for a Chinese banquet. They hand made their own vegetable spring rolls then taste tested an array of sauces, noodles, and prawn crackers.

In class the children learnt about the history of the Chinese zodiac and had a go at writing Chinese symbols and numbers. They made lanterns, Chinese drums and lucky red envelopes were given out.



### Brereton C of E Primary School

In worship this half term pupils have been exploring the theme 'People Jesus Met' and teachers have thoroughly enjoyed seeing the pupils' responses and reflections to these recorded worships. First they began by learning about Zacchaeus and the children designed logos to promote the key messages from the story.



After learning about Martha and Mary, the children built prayer dens and prayer jars, to remind them to take time within their day to be close to God; to listen and to learn from Him.

When celebrating Candlemas, pupils learnt about Simeon and made candles to display in their windows, to remind others that Jesus brings light and hope during dark times. Everyone was incredibly proud that the pupils took time in their week to still develop their spirituality and faith.



## Hartford C of E High School

### Pupil Bereavement Group

We plan for so many things... parties, holidays, marriage, the birth of a baby, a future career. Yet the loss of a loved one, whether expected or not, is always a shock and leaves a gaping hole in the very core of our being.

For young people, still fragile, who have not yet weathered the storms of life, the loss of a parent shakes the very foundation of who they are. It often brings with it a sense of fear and awareness of their own mortality.



Sadly, at Hartford Church of England High School, we have had to form a Bereavement Support Group for 12 of our pupils who have lost a parent in the last year.

Praying about the group, I longed for it to become a place of 'Hope and Healing', and so it was named.

The young people came tentatively to the first few gatherings, not knowing what to expect. Would they cope? Would they hold it together? Would it be painful? They did not know each other, apart from a couple of sibling pairs. However, we broke the ice with sweet treats and chatted informally, allowing them to get to know one another and share their stories as much or as little as they liked. We have spoken about bereavement, emotions, shared stories, laughed, cried, and supported one another, under a gentle structure.

On the approach to Christmas, we talked about how it would be different, gave them coping strategies and decorated candles to light on Christmas day for their loved one.

Over the weeks, the group have supported each other and become friends. I believe that knowing that they are not alone has been a real source of encouragement for them, and although they are all on different stages of the journey, it is a blessing to see the gentle healing of their hearts as they bravely face their tomorrows.

Though not all believers, they all warmly welcome prayer and encouraging scriptures to nourish their souls. During lockdown, our meetings have been forced online, but please do remember these young ones as they face their uncertain futures, knowing that Father God knows what they are going through and has a future prepared for each one of them.

*"He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds."* Psalm 147:3

**Tracy Morgan, School Chaplain**

## Hoole C of E Primary School



This year the school continued with their annual Christingle competition, but due to the current restraints, decided to ask children and families to make Christingles out of anything they could find. Photos of Christingles made from all sorts of things from real oranges to Terry's chocolate orange and from papier-mâché to Lego were posted.

It was delightful to join in an online Zoom for an interactive and lively service led by Reverend Sam Durdant-Hollamby who is a great friend and supporter of the school. Everyone explored the meaning of the Christingle and thought about how God's love surrounds the whole world, a great encouragement in times like these.



## Pott Shrigley C of E Primary School

### The Art & Soul Man inspires Pott Shrigley children to create entrance mosaic.



Artist and gifted communicator Chris Gilbert – known to many as The Art & Soul Man has worked with the children of Cheshire-based Pott Shrigley Church School to design and create a stunning mosaic to be displayed in the school entrance.

The project commenced with a design session where ideas were shared and sketched to incorporate imagery and the school values: Compassion, Koinonia and Respect. Each child had the chance to create a mosaic candle artwork to hone their skills before participating in two further 'Mosaic Days' that saw the design populated with hundreds of tiny tiles. Chris presented the completed artwork to the children in an engaging song-based assembly inviting all the children to 'play your part in God's Fine Art and take your place in the Great Mosaic.'

## Tushingham-with-Grindley C of E Primary School

Last half term pupils considered the value of Courage during their online collective worship. To summarise all they had learnt, the oldest pupils wrote some inspiring acrostic poems.

Courage is lots of things

**O**vercoming fear

**U**p is the only way with courage

**R**emember don't be frightened  
when courage is on your side

**A**lways stand up for yourself to  
those who doubt you

**G**etting your goal is only with  
courage

**E**lated, is how you feel when you  
are courageous.

By Rebecca

**C**aring is sharing

**O**thers help us through

**U**se and remember happy  
memories

**R**each out to other when you  
are struggling

**A**lways remember that you  
are not alone

**G**od is by your side

**E**veryone is part of Gods  
family even when times are  
hard

By Rory

**C**onquering Fear

**O**vercoming failure, it is the courage to  
continue that matters

**U**nderstanding Courage is the little voice that  
says I'll try again tomorrow

**R**esistance to give up

**A**ccomplishment despite danger

**G**race under Pressure

**E**nduring when you know you could lose

By William

