

Growing Courageous Advocates for Change Through Justice and Responsibility, Summer 2025.

Living your vision into being 'Let your light shine...'

If the purpose of education is the promotion of life in all its fullness and human flourishing then we here at St Mary's must seek to develop people who: - learn to flourish in every aspect of their lives and can work for the flourishing of others and the planet we share and - look beyond themselves and seek to bring hope and be a blessing to others, locally, nationally and globally.

Living Christ's vision; 'Let your light shine...

At St Mary's we hope that in educating for wisdom, hope, community and dignity we are living Christ's way in building God's kingdom here on earth and work to bring about a fairer and more joyful world.

What is 'courageous advocacy'? The act of speaking out against an issue of injustice, often on behalf of those whose voice is not heard. Speaking out, at whatever level this takes place, requires an element (and sometimes a great deal) of courage! Becoming a courageous advocate for change means being informed about an issue but moving beyond simply knowing, to saying and **doing**.

The thread running through the Bible is of a loving God, willing people to love each other in order to bring the Kingdom to earth. We aim at St Mary's to teach our children this message, that they as Christians are advocates for God and that at times this means they need to be courageous. They need to speak out for those that are poor, or weak, those who cannot speak or act for themselves. We use the terms 'courageous advocacy' and 'global citizenship' interchangeably as for us they both convey an approach to education that embodies an ethos of action taking, challenging injustice and becoming agents of change in the transformation of ourselves, our relationships and our communities from local level to the global.

Every child at St Mary's is a **courageous advocate and a global citizen**. We work hard to empower our children with the message that everyone can make a difference. We stand up for **Justice** and take our **responsibility** to act. We support charities chosen by our school, highlighting their work and supporting them with fundraising and activities. We also ensure each term that every class at St Mary's is working and acting as global citizens through planned activities linked to our wider curriculum. We also encourage our children to be responsive, to act where they see injustice, and where they see need.



Courageous advocacy through Justice and Responsibility at St Mary's:

Taking action should be a deeply educational and empowering experience involving reflection and critical thinking.

- Pupils should be involved in decision-making and have a sense of ownership and understanding of why they are taking a particular action

- Pupils should be encouraged to think critically through the full range of options and how they help address the causes and symptoms of a particular situation
- Pupils should be supported to think through the possible consequences of their actions and to take account of the law, school policies and ethical and safety considerations
- Pupils should reflect on what has been learned through taking action

Our Summer term actions have included:

Reception

Courageous Advocacy Summer 2025

Sunflower Project

Our Reception children took part in a very special project as part of their Courageous Advocacy. They carefully planted sunflower seeds for the new Reception children who will be joining our school in September. The sunflowers will be gifted to the new children after their transition visit.

As they planted, the children reflected on how they felt when they first started school — many remembered feeling scared, worried, or shy. They shared their own experiences and wanted to do something kind and welcoming to help the new children feel at ease. By giving them a sunflower, they hope to offer not only a cheerful gift but a message of care and encouragement.

This small act of kindness shows how even our youngest children can be courageous advocates — speaking up through actions that make others feel loved and supported. We are so proud of their empathy and thoughtfulness.

We are reminded of the words from 1 **Corinthians 16:14**: ***“Let all that you do be done in love.”*** Through this project, our Reception class has shown just that — love in action, helping others grow, just like their sunflowers.



Year One

Year One Courageous Advocacy – Summer Term 2025

As part of our extended curriculum and writing for different purposes, Year One considered this question?

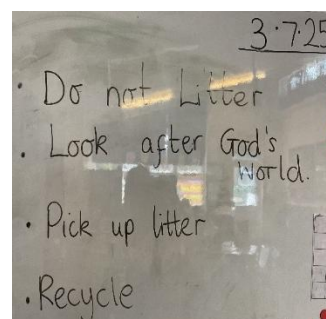
How might we help our children and young people to develop their prophetic voice and extend our understanding of what Courageous Advocacy is?

We decided to provide the opportunity to help our children look beyond themselves and ask “Big Questions”, to think globally about life and help the children develop an understanding of **protecting** the natural world including animals. We achieved this by considering; What is recycling? And how does pollution affect our oceans? We linked this to our RE work on Creation. We thought about How does God want us to look after His World? Knowledge is Power. **We are seeking to empower our pupils and to help them know, they have a voice and are able to speak up and speak out about important issues.**

Firstly, the children were given time to consider what **pollution, conservation, recycling** and **littering** truly mean. They discussed and shared their ideas together. These ideas were then drawn together and extended to consider concepts like, how do we **protect** and **conserve** and what can be done to help recycle all we can.



Using a selection of photos and Powerpoint information, the children identified a variety of materials that can be recycled. The children drew pictures of materials that can be recycled, recorded how they can be recycled ie bins and waste containers, and they also showed the dangers of how pollution in the form of plastic etc can be harmful to living things in our oceans.



Together they decided to represent their ideas in a bookmark form, because they could then be taken home and shared with family and friends and their learning shared with others, which in turn, would have a deeper and greater impact to bring about further change and grow active, global citizens within our school.



The thread running through the Bible is of a loving God willing people to love each other and care for His creation, in order to bring His Kingdom to earth. The children were given time to reflect and think upon what they had learned. The final step which the children considered was how they could take what they had learnt and to put it into some form of action.

“The action should be a deeply educational and an empowering experience involving reflection and critical thinking. Pupils should be involved in decision-making and have a sense of ownership and understanding of why they are taking a particular action.” So, as a result of their learning and work carried out on this theme, the children returned home and shared their learning with their families. The children felt it was important to pass on the message and encourage others to be aware too, which could lead to further action in the future and more people knowing about these important global issues.

Year Two

Courageous Advocacy – Year 2 – Summer Term 2025 Our School Community – Kindness Hearts



Ephesians 3:17:

"Then, by constantly using your faith, the life of Christ will be released deep inside you, and the resting place of his love will become the very source and root of your life,"

Hebrews 10:24-25:

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

We have been making 'Kindness Hearts.' We placed messages of encouragement on hearts and placed them around the school grounds.

We decided that this small act of kindness allowed others to feel valued, supported and happy within our community. This small act of love will hopefully make a big difference to many.



We began by discussing kindness, community and what it means to be a courageous advocate. We came up with short phrases like – 'You matter!' 'God loves everyone!' 'You are loved!' 'Be brave!' We decorated love hearts with these phrases. We placed them around our school for everyone within our school community to find. Back in class, we discussed how amazing it felt to do something for others and why kindness is powerful.



Year Three

This week, Year 3 have been learning about accepting and respecting other faiths.

We talked about how everyone can believe different things and still be kind friends to each other. We learned that faith means what people believe in and that some people pray in different ways, go to different places of worship, and celebrate different special days.

To help us remember to respect others, we made a Respect Wall in our classroom. Each of us drew or wrote one way we can show respect to people of different faiths. Some of our ideas included:

- ✦ "We can ask questions kindly."
- ✦ "We can play together."
- ✦ "We can learn about different faiths."
- ✦ "We can say nice things about people's celebrations."
- ✦ "We can stand up for people if someone is unkind."

We talked about how respecting other faiths helps everyone feel safe and happy at school. We also learned that even if we believe different things, we can still be friends, work together, and help each other.

We are proud of our Respect Wall and would like to share it with other classes so everyone in our school remembers to show respect and kindness to people of all faiths.

Thank you for supporting our Respect Wall!

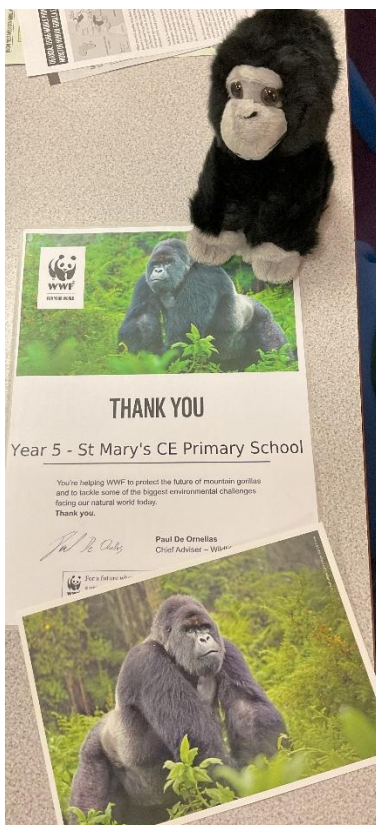
Year Four

Justice and responsibility Year 4

Year 4 have been learning about the rainforest in our geography unit and are now incredibly knowledgeable about the importance of looking after the rainforest. As such, we have decided to educate the other children in the school about the importance of looking after our environment. One thing we thought other children would be able to help with quite easily is recycling since if paper was recycled into other pieces of paper then less trees would need to be chopped down in the rainforest. The children worked in groups to research other benefits of recycling and prepared a presentation to deliver to other children. Each group went to a different class to deliver their presentations and educate the other children about the importance of looking after our world that God made for us.



Year Five



Courageous Advocacy Year 5 Summer 2025

Following our Literacy Unit based on the book *The Hunter* by Paul Geraghty, we decided as a class that we would like to support the work of a charity that looks after endangered species. We spent some time researching the animals we could support and Miss Barratt, our associate teacher, found out that we could adopt an animal with the WWF – The World Wildlife Foundation. We discovered that donations from animal sponsors are making a difference all over the world by safeguarding threatened species and their habitats and driving change with governments, businesses and finance sectors. We voted to sponsor a Mountain Gorilla. We chose this because we had learned about gorillas in year 4 and many of us knew a lot about them already. We also recognised that doing this is a way of showing God's love and taking our responsibility for the planet. Doing small things together can achieve great things. **In Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 it says: 'Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.'** The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 illustrates that being entrusted with even a small amount and using it faithfully leads to greater responsibility and reward. It emphasizes the importance of stewardship and diligence in small matters.



Year Six

Charity, in its essence, is about giving to those in need and making a positive impact on the world. It's a concept that resonates with many, and numerous quotes capture its spirit.

Examples include: **"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving"** from Mother Teresa and **"No one has ever become poor by giving"** from Anne Frank.

These quotes highlight the selfless nature of charity and its potential to create positive change. Year 6 realised that Sabrin, our sponsored child from Nepal needs funds raising if we are to continue to support her. They talked about ways that could involve the whole school and that they could organise. They made posters to advertise the event and asked the office to send an email. The parents brought cakes in and the children organised the actual sale, setting up the areas, selling the cakes and helping the children choose. The children understand that their actions change Sabrin's life, her family's life and her community, for the better. What better impact could we have? The children raised about £200.

