



The Oasis Ethos

Oasis is a Christian sponsor of Academies and this raises questions for some people. Therefore we want to explain a little more about what being 'Christian' means to us.

If organisational purpose sets out *why* an organisation does what it does, and mission describes *what* an organisation does in order to achieve the purpose, then ethos is about *who* an organisation is and the *way* it achieves its purpose and delivers the mission.

As with food, ethos is like a flavour or a taste that permeates a whole dish. It is in everything and flows through everything.

Ethos is the very essence of Oasis, our organisational DNA. In short, our ethos is our identity or personality.

A person's identity or personality can best be understood by observing or experiencing the way in which he/she behaves. It is the same for an organisation.

Many words can be used to describe Oasis' identity or its organisational behaviours but central to any such description are the following statements. Oasis has:

- A passion to include everyone
- A desire to treat everyone equally, respecting differences
- A commitment to healthy and open relationships
- A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul

It is true to say a person's behaviours reflect what a person believes. In other words, what we believe about life determines how we behave and the things that we value.

Oasis' identity or organisational behaviours are rooted in, and flow from the Christian faith. Oasis' work is motivated by the life, message and example of Jesus Christ. How Oasis as an organisation behaves has a direct relationship to what Oasis as an organisation believes. Oasis' beliefs direct and shape the organisation's behaviours.

The following statements represent a few examples of Oasis' core beliefs:

- Each individual is made in the image of the God who created all of us, making us all equal and different.
- God is love. Love is not simply one of God's attributes, but rather the very essence of his nature. This love pervades the universe and is unconditional rather than earned.
- God became human in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to where we are. He shared our experience of life. He felt joy and pain. He engages with us and understands us.
- Jesus served others rather than expecting to be served and willingly sacrificed his life through the cross.
- Jesus rose from the dead. Death is not the end. There is resurrection and hope.

Therefore, it follows that Oasis will behave by:

- Seeking to serve all people equally, respecting their differences and aspiring to meet the needs of the whole person and the whole community because each person is valuable to God.
- Accepting others for who they are because they are accepted and loved by God.
- Engaging in the whole life of the communities we work in.
- Sacrificially serving both the individuals and the communities with whom we work.
- Living with the hope that transformation is always possible because the resurrection of Christ shows that even the darkest situation can be overcome.

Oasis behaviours cannot be separated from its beliefs; they are integral to one another. Oasis believes that its beliefs cannot have their full validity if they are not lived out. Equally, the behaviours cannot fully represent Oasis without an understanding that they demonstrate the Christian faith. The beliefs and behaviours together constitute Oasis' ethos.

However, Oasis never seeks to impose its beliefs on anyone. Oasis is always clear with staff, students, parents/carers, volunteers and any other parties about the fact that its behaviours and the things that it values flow directly from its Christian beliefs. But to be part of Oasis does not require anyone to own or accept these beliefs.

Note: Oasis will also be producing

- statements that explain our understanding of key concepts like 'knowledge', 'truth' and 'transformation'
- 'think pieces' for staff development, and other interested individuals, that will explore issues like the relationship between Christian distinctiveness and an inclusive approach to the whole community; the implications of a Christian world view for curriculum design; the science v. faith debate
- Resources to develop the Oasis ethos in our Academies based on the behaviours identified in Steve Chalke's *Apprentice: walking the way of Christ* - journeying; longing; believing; questioning; belonging; serving; persevering; forgiving; listening; engaging