

The Parish of St. John the Baptist Smallwood, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 2UR



July 2019

St John the Baptist Church, Smallwood

Our Vision :

- An ever-increasing congregation of all ages where there is enthusiastic participation in vibrant and modern services, with people being drawn to the Christian faith.
- Strong relationships with Smallwood Primary School where parents are actively involved in our Church
- Active pastoral care being offered within the Smallwood community.
- Events organised that draw the church and the community together.
- An increasingly strong partnership with St Mary's, Astbury, where learning initiatives and good practice are shared.
- An active relationship with the Methodist Church in Smallwood.
- A financially strong church that can look to the future with confidence.

Where we are today:

To achieve our Vision we undoubtedly need a lot of help and for things to change.

If you were to visit St John's on a typical Sunday, with the exception of the Family Service, our attendance is very small, usually between 12 to 18 people with the average age above 60. We always have an enjoyable morning worship service with communion, followed by coffee and biscuits, where most will stay for a chat.

The Family Service is held on the third Sunday in the month during term times and we are blessed with an amazing primary church school next door. The Head and her teachers never fail to deliver a lovely service with the children always performing enthusiastically, and subsequently the church is often nearly full.

Unfortunately, however, on the remaining Sundays we are currently unable to attract the younger families to our other services. Opportunities clearly exist to build the congregation from the school attendees.

Although in the past we have held Alpha courses none have been held recently.

Until the interregnum, Fifth Sunday Services were rotated with Astbury St Marys. We hope this will resume on the appointment of the new Vicar.

In addition, we feel pastoral care in our relatively small parish is lacking, and although we recognise this is a time-consuming service, more is needed to be done.

Smallwood is a growing parish. Several new developments have been completed in recent years providing an opportunity for us to share our Christian faith.

What we do have at St John's is a real desire to grow.

In 2013 we revived the Annual Smallwood Fete after a hiatus of over 20 years. Held in September, this is always a tremendous success with around 1000 people coming for a fun filled family event.

We also want to promote weddings as this might be a way to bring younger people into the church.

Also importantly, we recognise we may need to make changes to our services to attract the younger age group.



The New Incumbent - Personal Specification

We are seeking a new Vicar who :-

- will faithfully preach and teach the word of God.
- has the energy, motivation and creativity to help us grow in faith and in numbers
- is able to support existing parish traditions whilst taking every opportunity to develop the churches
- will make our churches attractive to the 'unchurched'
- has a desire to develop the links with our church school, drawing both parents and children into the church family
- has a modern outlook that will engage with the younger people in our faith
- has a willingness to embrace the needs of both young and old
- has the ability to balance the needs/requirements of the two parishes
- will give leadership in pastoral care, rebuilding existing arrangements
- will strengthen and develop discipleship and fellowship group initiatives
- will give a commitment to be involved with community projects/village life
- has a readiness to engage with Churches Together in Congleton and the Rural Deanery
- is approachable, friendly and has a sense of humour
- is able to work with and guide the PCC towards common goals
- is an inspirational and captivating speaker
- has an understanding of the community we serve and of rural issues
- is careful to avoid discussing controversial political issues.

As an Extra

As the parishioners of Smallwood, we are really excited to be welcoming our new Vicar.

We are a small but really friendly and caring rural community. Our church, St. John's and our school, Smallwood Primary Academy are at the very heart of our village. They serve as the hub of our village for young and old and reflect the wealth of history and traditions that surrounds both whilst being forward thinking to embrace change, adapt and adopt to ensure what we offer in our faith reflects what our parishioners need from their church:

Our pupils at Smallwood Primary Academy were, as always, keen to have their say and this is what they would like from their new vicar:

Someone who:

- comes into school regularly.
- is fun.
- wants to talk to us and listen to what we have to say.
- will turn up on time when they say they are coming to school.
- will really get to know us, our names and what we are good at.
- could help direct our school.
- makes worship really fun when they come in.

They also added the following questions:-

- How important is the Church to you?
- Are you fond of children?
- Do you have any children?
- What will you do to make coming to Church fun?
- Would you tell funny stories?
- Would you enjoy being with children?
- How often would you visit our school?

The trustees and governors of the academy would warmly welcome:

- The guidance our new vicar could offer our church school.
- A vicar who could be an inspirational leader of faith in the 21st century.
- A vicar who can help us to be creative in our delivery of faith in our community in changing times.
- A vicar who inspires faith for our families.

Our Parish Team

Wardens	Michael Bracegirdle Richard Stockell
Secretary	Hazel Salter
Treasurer	Teresa Alcock
Weekly Offering envelopes	Richard Stockell
Administrator of the Chalice	Mike Gilsenan
Flower rota	Daphne Ford
Cleaning rota	Julie Bracegirdle
Coffee Sunday service	Julie Bracegirdle Mike Gilsenan
Web site editor	Jonathan Lusby

PCC Members

Chairman	VACANT
Vice chairman	Peter Tipping
Secretary	Hazel Salter
Treasurer	Teresa Alcock
Community Governor	Richard Stockell
Church Wardens	Michael Bracegirdle Richard Stockell
Members	Daphne Ford Mike Gilsenan Julie Bracegirdle Sandra Peters Helen Baker Sue Hartley

We have a large group of people who take turns to read the lesson at the Sunday services, and a very able body of volunteers who take turns to clean the church.

On the rare occasions that the organist is unable to be at a service there is an effective music and sound system. There is also a good PA system, all worked with a loop system.

We operate the weekly offering envelope scheme and this is well supported.

REGULAR SERVICES

Currently services take place at 9:30am every Sunday with Family Service held on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Our congregation embraces a traditional service, however new ideas that may help to spread the word of God will be considered.

FESTIVALS

There are many occasions when our church is used to celebrate festivals throughout the year.

Easter

At Easter every window in church is beautifully decorated by the school and members of the Parish so there are always Easter chickens and Easter eggs in abundance. We have an annual Easter Egg hunt in the grounds of the Church after the Service.

Harvest

This festival always takes place on the last Sunday in September. It is attended by children from the school who bring harvest baskets and flowers to the front of church to be blessed during the service.

At Harvest each window in the church is decorated by a different family. The following day the produce is auctioned at the Harvest Supper with proceeds being donated to church funds and the Rose Queen's chosen charities.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

For this service we are joined by members of the Royal British Legion. The retiring collection is donated to the Royal British Legion and a member of the local community plays the reveille. Refreshments are then available at the rear of the church. A member of the community, usually a child, is selected to lay the wreath on behalf of the church.

CHRISTMAS

There are many activities in church during the Christmas period.

We hold a candle lit carol service on a Sunday evening which results in a packed church, and a Christingle service attended by children, parents and other members of the community. During this service the retiring collection is donated to the Church of England Children's Society.

On Christmas Eve we hold a candle lit communion service, this is always well attended. We serve mulled wine and mince pies at the end.

EXTRA CHURCH ACTIVITIES

We are currently developing our web site set up for the church by a volunteer, and this will be subsequently managed by a member of the congregation.

Support Group for the bereaved, sick and potentially isolated

We are keen to build on our mission supporting villagers who are sick or in need of a visit by a friendly face. We know the isolation that can be suffered by rural communities and are keen to find an incumbent who can dedicate time each week to really get to know our diverse community; young and old. Loneliness and illness finds us all at times not just the elderly.

PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

Rose Queen

The Rose Queen is chosen from pupils at Smallwood Academy. A crowning ceremony is held in church each June when the queen is invested. The queen represents the church during her reign and visits other rose queen ceremonies in the area. This is a traditional village event which stretches back over 60 years and is common to many villages in our area.



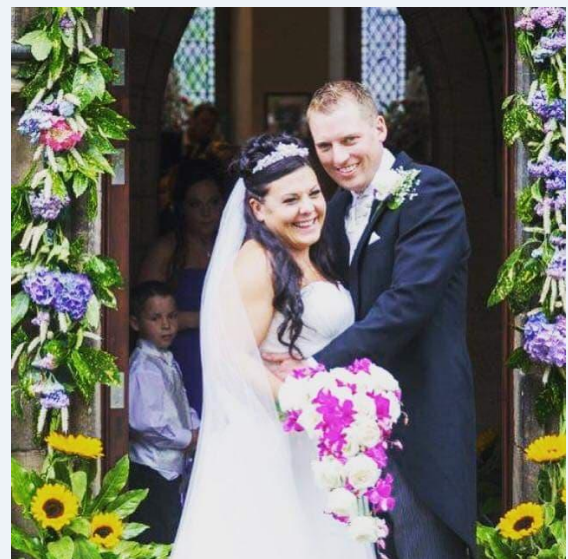
Confirmation

Confirmation is a regular feature hosted at Smallwood and is available to all junior school children from school and for adults in the village, who choose to prepare for confirmation.

Our School is very keen to develop the preparation for confirmation and support our young people's first key steps in faith and would welcome the support of the new incumbent with this.

Weddings

We hold a number of weddings each year both for local couples and those from nearby. We offer a beautiful service in a small, warm and friendly atmosphere.



Family Service

Family service is held at 9:30am on the second Sunday of every month.

In recent months Family Service has dwindled in number, and the desire of the PCC is to reinvigorate this and return to children from the school leading the service and performing a presentation of their choice.

At the end of the service the congregation would be invited to stay for coffee and biscuits.

We would welcome a new vicar who has vision, enthusiasm to harness this potential and work alongside the school to explore new and creative approaches to developing faith in our young people.

A TASTE OF SMALLWOOD

We think our village is very special. The church and school are central to our community and work closely together although there is opportunity to strengthen these ties.

Smallwood is a small Cheshire village, rich in rural history and many families who live here go back many generations. Recently we have worked hard as a church and a school to develop our sense of community.

This is a wonderful time of vibrancy and positive change for our village and we look forward to welcoming a new Vicar who is keen to grasp this opportunity to develop and build our community strength.

We have great hope for the future of our church: we think big even though we are small.

We would warmly welcome someone who has the energy, drive and imagination to help us realise the potential we know we have within our village.



OUR HISTORY IN BRIEF

Excerpts from "Old Smallwood" by Colin Jones & Margaret Meeke

St. John the Baptist Church Smallwood was built in 1845 with stone brought down in horse and cart from Mow Cop. The architects were C. & J. Trubshaw of Newcastle under Lyme.

The church was designed to seat 300 people, 188 adults and 112 children. The children all sat together at the back of church. There were 87 appropriated seats and 101 free seats. The child seats were also free. There are still some almost worn out labels on the left hand pews. They bear the names of families who hired the pews at 5 shillings (25p) a year. Strangers must never sit in these pews. So on busy Sundays the sidesmen had to place newcomers and non payers with skill.

The east window is adorned with stained glass in memory of Mrs Twemlow and Mrs Gordon. The windows in the nave, representing Jacob's dream and the parable of the Good Samaritan, are in memory of Mr Peter Hollinshead and John Mellor, who were wardens for many years.

The church lost its independence in 1955, having its vicarage put on the market. It then became linked with Astbury, Sandbach Heath and latterly Astbury again. Its great days were between the wars, with congregations of 100 and a choir of 4 adults and 8 children. Each year the whole church community was taken on a day trip to Llandudno, which was one of the highlights of the year.

The bell was silent during the war years, resuming briefly afterwards. The system became unsafe, so once again the bell was silent. It has now been repaired and is rung on Sundays by means of an electric motor.

War Memorial (from an old news cutting)

The war memorial is situated at the back of church on the right hand side as you walk through the door.

'A special service was held in Smallwood Church on August 31st for the unveiling and dedication of the war memorial tablet. Before the service there was a procession from the school, consisting of the church officers, ex-service men of the parish, (joined by a party of "comrades of the great war" from Sandbach) the choir and clergy. The unveiling ceremony was performed by Colonel H. M. Stephenson of Betchton Hall. He spoke of the splendid spirit emanating from those who served in the war, referring as an example, to the officer he had known, who was formerly connected with Smallwood. He ended by urging all to take part in making England a better, happier and more truly more Christian country. The Colonel then asked the vicar to accept the tablet as a gift for the permanent adornment of the church. The vicar made an appropriate response, and addressed the church wardens. (Messrs. G. Knight and D. Barratt). The Very Reverend the Dean of Chester offered a prayer, and then said: "In the faith of Jesus Christ, we dedicate this tablet to the glory of God and to the memory of Percy Chappell, Samuel Davies, William Kennerly and Herbert Tunstall, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen". The Dean spoke of the great sacrifices by which the safety of England had been won. The Dean had pronounced the blessing, the Reveille was sounded.'

The memorial tablet was specially designed to be in harmony with the architecture of the church. At the Armistice Day service in 2001, two new names were added to the tablet, Stanley Jackson, who was killed in action in 1939 and Thomas K. Evans, who was killed in 1952 during the Korean War. Dr. Jeff Cuttell dedicated these new inscriptions during the service.

The Chandelier

As you walk down the aisle look up into the inner circle of the chandelier and you will see the words:-

'This Corona was presented to Smallwood by the parishioners as a Jubilee offering October 24th 1895. Collectors: - Herbert Jones, Annie Bradford, Marion McGroom, Hannah Maria Bloor, Ellen Barrett, Agnes Bailey, Annie Cawley.'

The Jubilee must have been celebrating the church's 50th year.

In an old dictionary the word *Corona* means: - *A technical term for various things supposed to have some resemblance to a crown. A halo or luminous circle seen around a heavenly body.*

The reredos and altar cross

The reredos can be found on the wall behind the little altar to the right hand side and before the choir stalls.

This is a cutting from the Congleton Chronicle, "100 years ago" section, for Friday 20th November 1998.

'The memory of the late Rev. E .R .Williams, vicar of Smallwood, is still green amongst us, and today (Saturday) sees the culmination of the efforts of the vicar, his parishioners, friends and the clergy of the district and other friends, by the dedication of the reredos and altar cross given in the memory of the late vicar.'

Lights donated to church

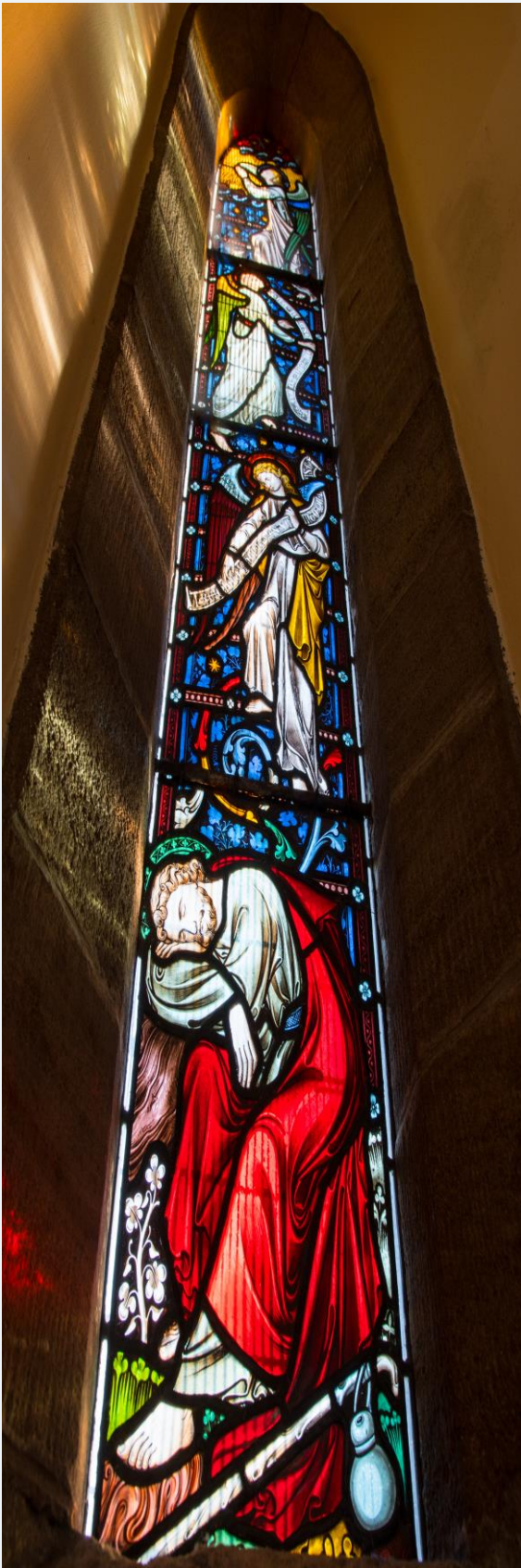
The 8 lamps in the nave were given in memory of Herbert Ford, Donald Leese, Fanny Elizabeth Hollinshead, Daniel Barrat, William Henry, Elizabeth Beech (Stanier) Edwin Kine, Elizabeth (Key), Prudence Ann Breathen, William Henry Tipping on October 30th 1955.

Chancel window

Given by Dorlinda Monk in 1928 in memory of her parents, Joseph & Harriet.

THE PARISH OF SMALLWOOD GEOGRAPHICALLY





SMALLWOOD STATISTICS

Population for 2019 653

of which it is estimated that 30 are
children up to 14 years of age

Population in 1801 492

90 families 82 houses

Population in 1881 570

Over the years the population has not
changed a lot

Area of Smallwood Parish 9 sq km
(3.5 sq miles)

Length of roads 18.5 km

Number of footpaths/bridleways 22

Average height above sea level 80m

A SHORT HISTORY OF SMALLWOOD VILLAGE

Smallwood is a very rural parish originally based on agriculture.

The population is mainly in small settlements spread throughout the area and this pattern may well be very old. The oldest recorded building is the Mill, 1299, and this would have been supported by local farms and associated workers and their dwellings.

Interestingly the population has not changed much over the last two hundred years. In 1801 it was 492 with 90 families and 82 houses. In 1881 it was 578. In 2006 it was 570, comprising 236 houses and about the same number of families as in 1881. This suggests that people were more crowded with bigger families than today.

Many of the settlements have buildings which can be dated to the early 16th century, some with listed buildings.

The settlements are:-

Smallwood

This is the "central" settlement with the Anglican Church and School, built in 1845, and the modern Village Hall built in 1971.

Until 1845 Four Lanes End was the centre of Smallwood shown on Burdett's map of 1777. Others are:- Brookhouse Green, Spen Green, Sims Green, Overton Green, Martin's Moss, Moss End, Moss Mere, Day Green.

In addition, there are farms and groups of buildings along the principal road, the A50, which include three very old hostelrys and an old industrial site called Jackson's Forge where carts were made. Part of this site now has modern houses -Smallwood Forge.

Over the years, as the wooden framed buildings have become dilapidated, the outside walls have been rebuilt in brick. Inside walls often show the original wooden frame. Some buildings have been demolished and some extended.

Development took place in the 19th century as shown by the many more buildings on the OS Map of 1909.

In the 1930's and 40's despite the war building continued with the development of three small groups of council houses built for agricultural workers.

Recent developments have included the conversion of redundant barns at Moss End, a development at Jackson's forge on the A50 and one at Brookhouse Green, in addition to a small development of shared-ownership and starter homes on Congleton Road.

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF SMALLWOOD VILLAGE LANDSCAPE

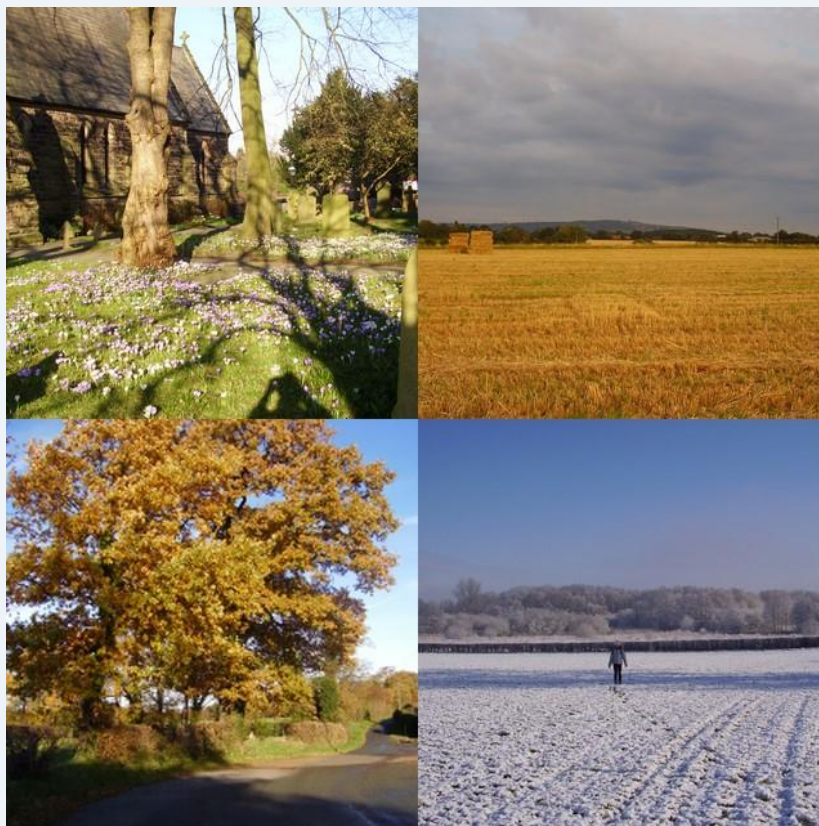
Smallwood is a farming parish and the landscape is that of rich arable farming, with fields enclosed by hedges and associated trees. There are woods and low lying areas with pools and rivers providing a wonderful habitat for wildlife.

The pools were often the result of Marl (clay) extraction for making the bricks for the village houses and barns on site, and for improving light soils. The low lying areas were often a source of peat and were divided into moss rooms with rights of extraction. One such area is Brookhouse Moss, a site of special scientific interest and now protected.

The farms are either on their own or found with other houses, in small groups spread throughout the parish. Many of these farms have the name Green or Moss in them. A characteristic of the groups or settlements is that they have open country between one and the next, and the houses have generous gardens.

Smallwood was also known for market gardening, and this is still practised on a reduced scale.

The parish is crisscrossed by hedge lined country lanes. There are also 22 footpaths and bridle ways which are well used. The best way to appreciate Smallwood is in fact to walk some of the lanes and footpaths and sample a woodland walk through Brookhouse Moss or over fields from Smallwood centre.



Scenes in and around Smallwood Church & village

VILLAGE ACTIVITIES

Within the village there are many different activities which are held on a regular monthly or weekly basis. The village has a very good community spirit which over the last few years has become stronger.

Village Hall

The village hall tends to be the hub of the village and is used by the Fete and Events Team for regular social fundraising events.

Women's Institute

The W.I. holds a monthly meeting in the village hall with a speaker and competition and people are very welcome to join if they so wish.

Smallwood Notes

This is a monthly newsletter, which has its own Facebook Page, in which different organisations within the village can describe what they have been doing or what they are about to do. It is a useful way of getting the news around the village. Once it has been produced it is printed and delivered to every house in the village free of charge. There is a team of people who deliver the letters monthly. This scheme has been running now for about 15 years and operates like clockwork.

Because of this free newsletter Smallwood Church does not have a 'Parish News.'



Smallwood Church of England Primary Academy **Our Mission Statement**

At Smallwood our logo is a torch it helps us to remember who we are,
what we value and what we do.

A torch is a beacon,
A light in the darkness,
A light to guide others.

Our torch reminds us that we walk in the light of Christ
and our goal is to reflect the glory of his name.

T **ogether** we are stronger as we worship, learn and live together as a community in Christ.

O **thers** we learn to respect and value others and to share our faith with everyone we meet.

R **esilience** we learn to be strong, caring, happy and self-confident.
Learning to love and accept ourselves giving us the strength to persevere.

C **hallenge** we strive to be the best we can be in all we do and to find the spark that lets each one of us light up the darkness. Everyone has a talent and together we can find and nurture it.

H **ope** we shape the future of the world we live in and together we can make our world a better place. Excellence in our love for others, our learning and our commitment to our community will bring hope to the world.



The Academy

Smallwood Academy dates back to around the year 1846 and has been extensively modernised since then. In 1970 a new hall was added and a purpose built classroom for the youngest pupils was built in 1996. 2002 saw major accommodation changes to the school, including the provision of two new classrooms.

In addition, the former schoolmaster's house adjoining the Academy has been converted into a classroom, with rooms above available for music tuition and taking small group work in.

Following our successful conversion to an Academy in August 2014 we have replaced our oldest 'temporary' classrooms and built a new purpose designed hall. This allows us to offer our pupils and staff the very best accommodation in which to play and learn.

Smallwood is a scattered area, and although there is no village centre as such, there is a very strong community spirit. The Academy attracts pupils from a very wide area, which brings us a wonderful mix of families. It is located in beautiful Cheshire countryside, surrounded by fields, yet is easily accessible.

The Academy also reaches out to the outside world wherever possible, so you will often see in the Academy - guest speakers, poets doing workshops, theatre groups, artists working with the children, representatives from sports clubs who take fitness sessions for us, staff and students from local secondary Academies and the university, as well as parents and grandparents - anyone, that is, who is willing to contribute to the Academy's quality environment.

Our Academy encourages the development of a close partnership between teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, trustees, governors and the wider community, so that each can play their part in equipping the children with the spiritual and educational needs for their everyday lives, both now and in the future.

Our aim is to ensure that our Academy is a place where high social and moral values are upheld, and where respect for people, property and the environment hold paramount importance.

In all, we aim to provide our children with their full educational entitlement - emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual.

This is a Church Academy. We aspire to provide the foundations upon which a strong Christian faith can be built. We encourage every child to develop those personal Christian values so that they begin to understand the value of prayer, love, forgiveness and trust, as well as an understanding of and respect for the other major world religions. Our association with the local church is cemented by regular visits from our vicar. Children, who wish, contribute to the Family Service held in the village church on the third Sunday of each month, and the whole Academy celebrates significant religious festivals in church. In addition, Daily Worship is held in church at least once every term. All these events have become an integral part of the school's tradition, and are highly valued.

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught as a discreet subject in our Academy. There is a firm basis of Christianity in our R E teaching, but this includes comparison and understanding of other religions and cultures.

In translating our beliefs and practices into everyday life, we are active in supporting a wide range of charities, not just by fund raising but by collecting toys at Christmas, for Operation Christmas Child.





A welcome approach to St. John's Church, Smallwood.

Please come in and join us.