

THE ANGLICAN IDENTITY OF OUR SCHOOLS

Anglican
Schools
Australia



A summary of the paper *Enhancing our Anglican Identity* by The Reverend Dr Daniel Heischman DD

What does it mean to be an Anglican school in Australia today? How to be both places of welcome and inclusivity, but also communities with a clear affinity to the beliefs and practices of Anglicanism. There are five ‘markers’ of a school’s Anglican Identity.



1: FAITH

For Anglican schools, faith is incarnational, invitational and interactive. It is grounded in our belief in Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Anglican schools unashamedly affirm and follow Christ, as the foundation for all that we are as a school community. Faith is invitational in Anglican schools. We invite our students to deepen their own Christian convictions or plumb the depths of whatever faith tradition they come from and/or currently profess. Anglican schools have always understood that breadth of viewpoints is a strength of our communities.

2: REASON

Anglican schools have long maintained that intellect is a gift from God, hence our reputation worldwide for the pursuit of academic excellence. We seek to place reason within the larger context of what makes us both human and children of God. While we do not tell students what to think, we expect them to do the hard work of thinking; that task does not work against their current or potential faith but serves to enrich and deepen it.

‘This is who we are as Anglican schools,
this is what we have to offer to our students,
their families, our country, our world’



3: WORSHIP

Worship is one of the defining markers of an Anglican school. Worship is also educative in an Anglican school. It is through worship that students learn about the Christian faith, and in some cases have opportunities to learn about other faiths. Through worship students learn to appreciate something larger and older than themselves, opening them to the possibility of engaging with God on God's terms, while having the chance to learn of the value of stillness, silence, and reverence in a well-balanced life. It may seem odd that, within a school community, a group of largely unchurched people are doing church. This, however, points to a fundamental reality of all Anglican worship – participation often precedes understanding; experiencing worship paves the way to deeper meaning.

4: INCLUSION

While anchored in our own tradition, Anglican schools are diverse places that reflect the beliefs of the families and communities that they are drawn from. Anglican schools are welcoming communities, enriched by the

presence of those who practice other faiths, as well as no faith. Anglican schools tell a particular story but ensure that the stories of others will also be heard and explored. By virtue of saying who we are, we allow others to do the same.

5: CHARACTER AND SERVICE

Anglican schools ground our character formation in the teachings of Jesus, who encourages us to think of the needs of others and not just of ourselves. Serving others builds character, while strong moral character leads to a desire to serve others. Anglicanism has always had a deep attachment to the local communities where churches find themselves, and Anglican schools have an opportunity to build our relationships with the local community through our commitment to serving it. Daily school life provides opportunities for our students to grow in grace, compassion, and self-understanding. Through serving others, our hope is that students may cultivate a lifelong love of God through love of others.