



# The Oasis narrative for inclusive education

Education is a fundamental and long-term driver of change for individuals and whole communities and is therefore critical to the development of healthy neighbourhoods. Schools are one of the key anchor institutions in a community, which act as a gathering point and an important civic centre for children, young people, and their families. Given this, we prioritise schooling alongside a range of other integrated interventions (housing, church, advice/ support services, children's/ youth/ families work) at the heart of our neighbourhood model.

In our view, education unlocks opportunity for individuals but more importantly, it supports people to explore the narrative that provides life purpose (their meaning-making story) – who they are and who they are becoming. The role of Oasis education is to inspire, enable and develop all people to explore their life purpose and to offer quality opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge, character traits, relationships, critical thinking, and community support that is required to thrive and flourish.

## **1. Inclusive, broad, and quality opportunity**

Our education is therefore purposely broad, inclusive, and experiential, recognising that deep knowledge is far more than an intellectual pursuit. It is not simply about the ability to recall information purely in terms of irreducible, factual 'head' knowledge. Learning is about exploring gifts and potential, and about gaining wisdom through the practical application of knowledge to everyday life. Oasis education therefore aims to ensure that all students (and particularly those who might normally lack broad opportunity) receive opportunities that help to grow technical skills (both academic and vocational), to develop a sense of inquiry and curiosity, to build communications and social skills, to expand horizons, to develop social conscience, to engage confidently and critically with the world, to understand and respect others, and to explore a values-centred approach to life through the Oasis 9 Habits. For this reason, we seek to deliver the Oasis Entitlement, which guarantees broad, equitable and exciting opportunities and promotes social and cultural capital for all our students. We recognise that we have the privilege of working with children and young people (in school and the wider community) during the formative stages of their development. Therefore, we look to develop holistic and broad systems of support for children and their families through these moments – during the Early Years phase, as children approach school transitions, and as young people grow through adolescence.

## **2. Formation and virtues**

Our education deliberately prioritises opportunity for us all to explore the great questions of life; what we care about at the highest level, what makes life worthwhile, and who we are and who we are becoming. It provides space for philosophical, moral, and spiritual enquiry; embeds opportunity for character development through the lens of our Christ-centred 9 Habits; and focuses on the ultimate 'end' of education – to inspire individuals to become active, compassionate, fulfilled, justice-driven, and other-centred members of society. We care deeply about the people that our students become and therefore seek to ensure that we learn from one another and practice the 9 Habits together as staff, students, family members and the wider community.

## **3. Relational, restorative, and loving**

Our education builds on our theology of relentless and inclusive love, and our ethos of perseverance. It seeks to embed relationship-centred and restorative approaches throughout. Driven by new insights into neuroscience, we seek to adopt relational, life-to-life approaches to mentoring, mental health support, pastoral systems, behaviour policy, and to wider family support to name a few critical areas.

We actively support leaders and all those involved in the work of Oasis to embed this approach. We prioritise wellbeing in its widest possible sense, recognising that teaching and learning requires inspirational role modelling from trusted relationships. We know that all our students are extremely valuable, and because of this, we have high expectations for everyone, no matter their background or ability; our starting point is that we will all do well together. We learn not just through texts and information, but by observation, relationship, and example. Given this understanding, we seek to remove the need for student exclusions, recognising that this often only exacerbates and embeds lack of opportunity. We are focussed on delivering a new framework for including children and young people – one that is connected into our wider community framework and addresses the support that all children, young people, and their families need to be able to access education.

#### **4. Community-oriented, holistic, and locally contextualised**

We consider that it takes a village to raise a child and have therefore developed a broad ranging approach that focusses on the child and their family in the context of their whole life in community. We know that a school can only succeed if there is a strong and engaging partnership between staff, students, their family members, and the wider community. In essence, a school can only thrive in the long-term if the community it sits in thrives too. This is particularly true in the disadvantaged communities that we serve. If the wider community flourishes, then many of the chronic challenges that schools currently face are reduced – low levels of parental engagement, poor mental health, poor housing conditions, lack of positive role models, low health, and wellbeing outcomes. Therefore, the unique nature of Oasis' educational model is that it sits in the context of and forms an active part of our whole integrated community approach.

In other words, the purpose of Oasis education is to support people to live life to the full. It must ensure that all our learning is high quality, integrated (body, mind and spirit), holistic, and mentor led. Learning that is designed to equip us all for life, for strong relationships, for wise decision making, and good judgement. Learning that brings contentment, health, justice, unity, and restoration at an individual, communal, national, global and creational level.

#### **Oasis' educational provision therefore prioritises:**

- A quality, broad, inspiring, experiential, and inclusive curriculum, which builds on the Oasis Entitlement
- Broad ranging opportunity to explore character, identity, and purpose through the Oasis ethos and 9 Habits
- A restorative and loving learning environment – offering targeted support to the most vulnerable children and young people
- Wrap around community support to students and their families – youth/ children's work, advice and support services, community empowerment, community housing
- Quality pastoral support and safeguarding systems that consider the student in the context of their family and community
- Community leadership, recognising that schooling will thrive sustainably if the entire community thrives too
- Equity of opportunity and a focus on support for disadvantaged communities