

## Hospitality: a Reflection on the Values of St Bede's

The source of hospitality is the heart of God who yearns to unite every creature within one embrace. Only in the fullness of time will God gather all things in Christ, yet God's boundless welcome is something we already enjoy here and now in the Eucharist. Our life together as a community gives us a foretaste of the communion of saints. So St Bede's has the power to be a sacrament of God's hospitality, a house of God, offering His nurture and protection to all who come under our roof. It is not enough merely to offer a welcome and pastoral care. Our faith must recognise the One who comes to us in the person of the student, member of staff and visitor. It is the Lord, who has identified Himself with each of His sisters and brothers. If we are to give them bread and not stones, and truly meet Christ in them face to face, we must realise the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us for the ministry of hospitality, and remember how deeply people are yearning for the things of God. We must respect our guests, which protects the mystery of their hearts and brings healing. We have our ongoing stream of worship, which they can enter. We have the fellowship of the altar, the table, the learning and recreational community. We offer security. Our school and grounds have simple beauty. We offer courtesy, acceptance, and intercession. The Spirit has given us gifts of guidance, teaching, and encouragement by which we can help young people and each other grow in Christ, even as we recognise that not every one will be easy to welcome and nurture. Just as we enrich each other's lives, so they enrich ours. We welcome adults and young people of every race and culture, rejoicing in the breadth and diversity of human experience that they bring to us. Their lives enlarge our vision of God's world. Their stories and their experience of God stir and challenge us. If we are attentive, each will be a word and gift of God to us.