

The Christian and Ignatian Roots of the Jesuit Pupil Profile

The aim of Jesuit education is ‘**improvement in living and learning for the greater glory of God and the common good**’. Forming intellectually competent, good and virtuous young people through education has been the work of Jesuit schools since 1548. It is desired by parents for their children and an enterprise in which all teachers can share.

The virtues in this profile of a pupil in a Jesuit school have their roots in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the spirit of St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus and Jesuit schools, who developed a pathway to God and to human fulfilment which many have found helpful.

The starting point for Ignatius is always **gratitude** – an attitude of mind that habitually notices daily blessings and the good things that happen to us, giving our lives meaning and enjoyment, and sometimes pause for thought and a nudge to put things right. The end point of Ignatian spirituality is **generosity** – the impulse to give and not to count the cost, to serve without reward, to have big hearts and great minds, to be men and women for others.

Ignatius tells us that we need to be **attentive** to the big and the small things, to the responses of other people, to the stirrings in our hearts, and to the preoccupations that thread their way through our lives. Being attentive takes practice; it is much easier to rush from one thing to the next, taking little time to notice anything. Once we develop the habit of being attentive, we can begin to **discern** what is good for us and what is not; and what God calls us to be, and to do.

In the Christian tradition, it is never enough simply to notice: we must allow ourselves to be moved by what we see, especially by the plight of those who suffer.

Compassion – the ability to sense deeply the predicament of the other – is fundamental to seeing the world with Jesus’s eyes. Being compassionate leads to **love** – a deep and genuine bond with the other person, something that is outgoing and not focussed on myself. The love God has for us is the model of the love we are

called to show others, including those who are against us.

Having **faith** is crucial to human wellbeing – faith in myself, my emotions, my judgements; faith in others and their faith in me; faith my family and in the communities to which I belong; and faith in God. Faith cannot be taken for granted; it has to be built up day by day. Once we begin to have a little faith, we have **hope**, because we can trust ourselves and those around us with the decisions which will shape the future. Without hope we become insular, lacking in love, and ultimately despairing. The three core virtues of the gospel of Jesus are faith, hope and love.

Eloquence – the ability to articulate clearly what we believe and feel and to do so in a way that, with integrity, engages and persuades others – is a central characteristic of Jesuit education. But eloquence must be used in a **truthful** way – to speak truth about myself, about others, about God and the world around us. Education is the search for truth and the eloquent articulation of what we discover. Jesus said, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life.’

To be educated is to be **learned** – to know about God’s creation and about people who are part of it. But facts and skills are of little value unless we have **wisdom** also – the ability to see what is important and what is not.

Curiosity is needed to sustain learning. It is what keeps us going. It is what opens up new horizons. It leads us to find God in all things. In the Jesuit tradition, learning is something to be **actively** engaged in by probing, seeking, asking, challenging, questioning until the truth is plain – it is to think for oneself and become a lifelong learner.

Activity can easily become the distraction of being busy. Using wisdom and discernment, we can live our lives more **intentionally** – getting the balance right; living in the present moment rather than in the unchangeable past or an unknown future. Living in this way is to be **prophetic** – announcing the new perspective of the gospel on what it means to be human. Jesus is an example of someone who lived his life intentionally and prophetically.



Pupils in a Jesuit school are growing to be . . .

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and **generous** with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and **discerning** about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and **loving** by their just actions and forgiving words.

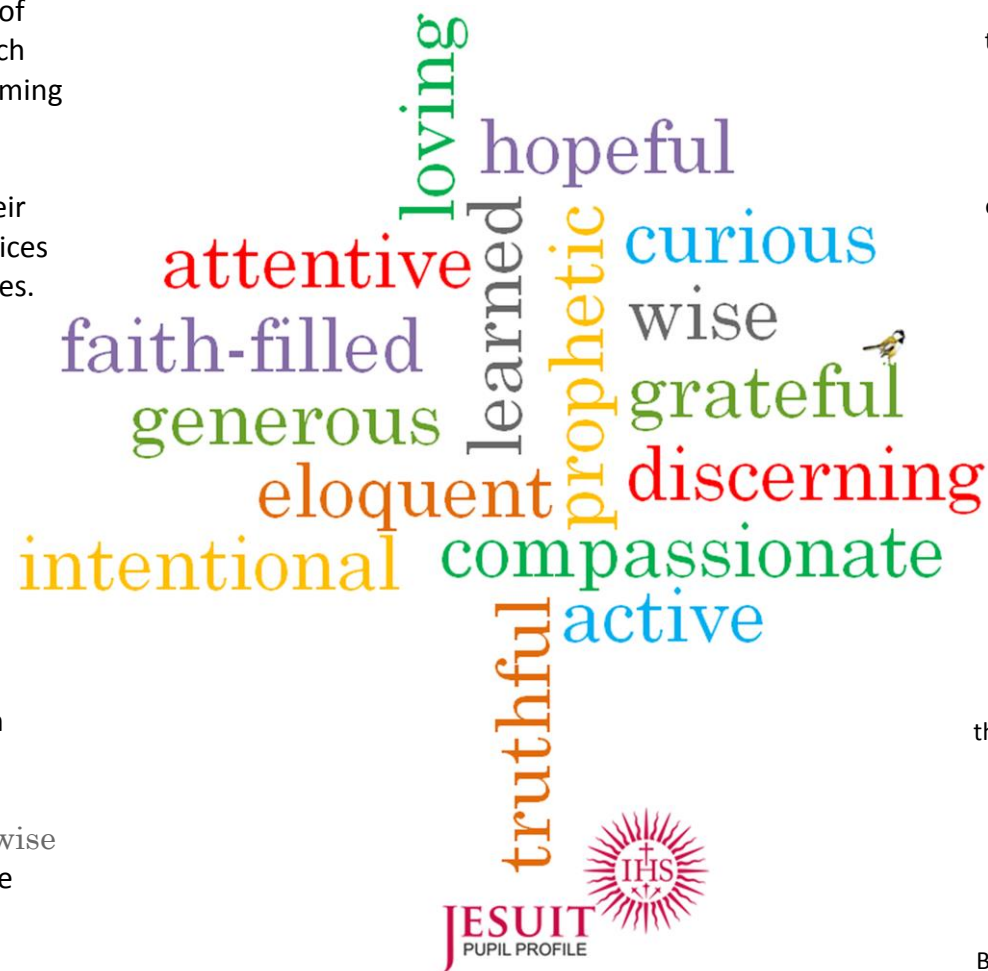
Faith-filled in their beliefs and **hopeful** for the future.

Eloquent and **truthful** in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and **wise** in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

Curious about everything; and **active** in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and **prophetic** in the example they set to others.



“What can we say the kingdom of God is like? It is like a mustard seed which, at the time of its sowing in the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown, it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.”

Gospel of Mark 4:30-32

Jesuit schools help their pupils grow . . .

By encouraging them to know and be **grateful** for all their gifts, developing them to the full so that they can be **generous** in the service of others.

By promoting the practice of **attentive** reflection and **discerning** decision making: in teaching, in the examen, prayer and retreats; and through the practice and example of school leaders and staff.

By being **compassionate** and **loving** in the way pupils are treated, especially when a pupil is in trouble; and by opening pupils' eyes to those who suffer poverty, injustice or violence.

By passing on the living and **faith-filled** tradition of Jesus Christ; by having persevering faith in the pupils, and by encouraging them, in turn, to have faith and **hope** in others.

By developing an **eloquent** language which pupils can use to understand and articulate their emotions, beliefs, and questions, encouraged by the example of their teachers to be **truthful** in the way they represent themselves and speak about the world.

By the breadth and depth of the curriculum; by excellence of teaching, and the creation of opportunities to become more **learned** and **wise**.

By leading pupils to be **curious** about the universe and all human activity, and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, and by providing opportunities for them to be **active** in the life of the school, the Church, and the wider community.

By being a school community which is **intentional** in its way of proceeding to build-up quality of life; and which is **prophetic** in the way it offers an alternative vision of education and the human person rooted in the gospel.