



Spirituality Policy

Spiritual flourishing in our schools

Our vision is to ensure that everyone in our school has the opportunity to grow spiritually as well as academically. This is in line with the Church of England's vision for education, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart.

We believe that children can only flourish if their lives are enriched spiritually. We aim to provide multiple ways for them to receive this enrichment throughout all our daily interactions. This will include collective worship, but also our curriculum as we build opportunities into other areas of provision.

In our schools, we believe that spiritual development means the opportunities that everyone has to reflect and consider themselves and their place in the world, the others around them, the beauty that they see, and things that are beyond their immediate location. Often, these will arise from those 'wow' moments that fascinate and lead to further contemplation and consideration. In providing these moments, we enable our school community to flourish in their learning and in life more generally. We acknowledge the need to become aware of the world in all its wonder.

David Smith's work for the Stapleford Centre '*Making sense of Spiritual Development*' (1999) helpfully presented a structure for mapping the progression of spiritual development across the curriculum.

He suggested four windows into spiritual development:

- **Spiritual Capacities:** recognition that all human beings are capable of spiritual growth through capacities such as self-awareness, reflection, empathy, imagination and creativity
- **Spiritual Experiences:** ways in which pupils can encounter the spiritual dimension of life
- **Spiritual Understanding:** the need to have developed an understanding to make sense of the spiritual experiences encountered and capacities exercised
- **Spiritual responses:** how this experience and understanding impacts on our lives and shapes the way in which we live our lives.

Three main ideas lend themselves to this approach:

- the need to become aware of the world in all its wonder but also a sad realisation of its many problems, i.e. to realise that the world is both 'awe-full' but also sadly 'awful' at times too, (to be aware of both its 'Wows' but also its 'Ows')

- the need to have a chance to reflect or think on this both alone and with others
- the need to apply what has been learnt from this process in some sort of expressive, active way.

Developing this further we have drawn from the work of Liz Mills:

Windows are for looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders, both the 'wows' and 'ows'; things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. The whole curriculum and life itself are full of opportunities to recognise this sensitively.

Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions learning from our own and each other's responses. In school we must allow time for this for individual and group reflection and sharing of perspectives. This helps children to develop their own set of beliefs, not just religious but about everyday life. Some subjects and times allow for this specifically, such as religious education and collective worship but in all subjects, there will be opportunities, unexpected or planned, when things just 'crop up'. Handled sensitively, it is possible to make the most of all these times, if there is ongoing deliberate and corporate staff and pupil support.

Doors are for looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving. We want our pupils to establish ways that they can implement these changes so that they develop in confidence to be able to do this throughout their lives themselves, developing their own sense self-worth, confidence and reduce anxiety over life's issues.

Our definition of Spirituality

We believe that spirituality can be defined as a growing understanding of **self** (*being a unique person and understanding self-perception*), **others** (*how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships*), **the world & beauty** (*perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to nature and art, and environmental factors*), and **beyond** (*relating to the transcendental and understanding experienced and meaning outside the 'everyday', a connection with God*).

Vision

The Church school offers a spiritual and moral basis for the development of human wholeness and a sure foundation for personal and social values based on the person and ministry of Christ. A distinctive language is provided for understanding life and interpreting human experience. As a community of faith, the Church school should, in its best expression, reflect the nature of the Trinity, a life shared and defined by reference to others. Here we can begin to discover who we are, why we are, and – perhaps most importantly – what we might be.

The Way Ahead, Chapter 3 para 3.26

Our school vision supports spiritual development because there is the expectation that this will enable everyone in our school to flourish, and become "Good people, doing well". When planning experiences for both adults and children, we will consider what they will gain from

those experiences. This may be academic improvement, social development or spiritual growth. We believe that spirituality comes throughout the taught and extra curriculum, and exists beyond acts of collective worship. These will naturally enable people the time and space to reflect and develop spiritual understanding, but wider experiences will also act as 'windows' to unlock moments of awe and wonder that promote the spiritual dimension of life.

Collective Worship

Our acts of collective worship are central to the life of our school. These have many purposes, but spiritual development is at the heart of them all. During acts of collective worship, there will be opportunities to grow spiritually, becoming more aware of the world around us, growing our fascination for it, and having the time and space to reflect and consider it more fully. Through these opportunities, pupils will grow spiritually. They will be guided in their thinking and will appreciate how this can be applied to their own lives.

Teaching

Our curriculum offers many opportunities to develop spirituality. Some of these will be planned moments, where pupils are given time to reflect. Others will be more spontaneous, arising from the 'wow' moments when children encounter something for the first time. Teachers will always consider where opportunities for spiritual growth might be provided when planning their lessons.

Different aspects of the curriculum will offer the opportunity for pupils to apply what has been learnt in an expressive, active way. This is why our lessons do not always lead to a written response and we believe that there are other ways that children can express themselves. In doing so, they are enhancing their spiritual growth. Our classrooms are safe spaces that allow children to explore and share thoughts and values together.

Throughout our curriculum we offer opportunities for children to practice 'mindfulness'. This can be linked to the notion of making space for exploring the spiritual (Anne Lumb). In the same way, subjects including RE allow the opportunity for pupils to explore 'big questions' that contribute towards their spiritual growth.

Monitoring

Governors will monitor how effectively our vision is being enacted in our schools, and how we are planning for and achieving spiritual development. SIAMS inspectors will also investigate this through the work that they undertake.

R Weights
July 2024