

Spirituality Policy

St Mary's Church of England School



Our Vision:

**'BUILDING A CARING COMMUNITY,
WHERE ALL CAN LEARN AND SHINE!'**

***As a church school we are inspired by Jesus teaching to:
'Love God and Love Others as Ourselves'
Matthew 12 vs 30-31***

Spirituality Policy

At St Mary's CE School we describe spirituality as:

Spirituality:

enables us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves. It enables and embraces children's questions, doubts and wonder of existence.

Spiritual development:

has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live

It involves an increasing awareness of the concept of others. A growing sense of empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others.

Our aim is to: establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual development of all pupils through the following objectives;

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others);
- Develop strategies to build good mental health (see mental health policy);
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions;
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life;
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination;
- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.

These objectives will enable the pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

Teaching and learning

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues the aims and objectives by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values;
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life;
- Unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and children;
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this;

- A solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed;
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer;
- That children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits;
- The provision of opportunities to listen attentively and observe carefully, listening with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas;
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others;
- That moral development is linked to spiritual development through strategies such as 'windows, mirrors and doors' (see Appendix 2);
- That the RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives;
- That children are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected;
- Promotion of strategies for positive mental health (see Appendix 3).

Approaches

In our school we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning

- Seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy;
- Allowing children the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions and to celebrate diversity;
- Providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness;
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement;
- Encouraging children to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values;
- Enabling children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today;
- Providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder.

The appendices to this policy show our progression and links to the curriculum as well as the transformation progression which supports us in measuring progress. These are based on the Ricketts grids.

We support children and staff's understanding of this by using a visual model which links back to our vision:



Ourselves:

Our spirituality shapes us. Everyone is spiritual whether they have a faith and follow a religion or not. We seek to nurture and celebrate the unique value and self-worth of each member of our school family and to develop confident individuals. We use Heartsmart as our RSHE scheme. Through the Heartsmart High 5 we develop our understanding of ourselves and how to relate to others.

Others:

We are all part of the community - here in school, elsewhere, locally and globally too! Spirituality helps us to understand how our actions can have an impact on others. We develop spirituality through how we show compassion to those around us. Our wellbeing ambassadors guide us in looking after one another as a school community.

The World:

Each week, using Picture News, we share current events from around the world, prompting us to think deeply about the situations others face, and what part we can play in our world.

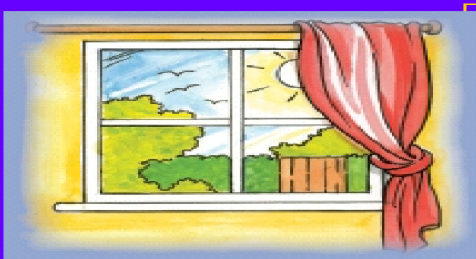
Big Questions:

Within our worship and through out curriculum learning, we explore big questions to deepen our spiritual understanding. We encourage our learners to be curious and to ask their own questions, too. There is a close link between RE and spirituality, and children are actively encouraged to spend time reflecting on and asking deep questions in RE. Teachers use music, artwork, photographs, poetry and times of stillness. Clergy members support our pupil's in considering biq questions and

termly reflective days help deepen our thinking and understanding in the areas of self/others/world and beyond.

We also use the **Windows, mirrors and doors approach to spirituality within our RE curriculum.** (Taken from Salisbury Diocese Spirituality Policy – Derek Holloway/Andrew Rickett 2012)

WINDOWS:



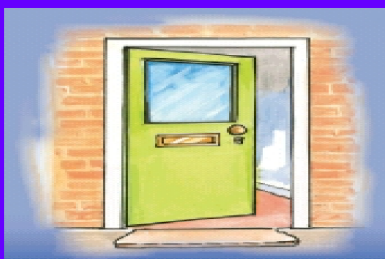
giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to **wonder** about life's 'WOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OVVs' (things that bring us up short). In this children are learning *about* life in all its fullness.

MIRRORS:



giving children opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to **meditate** on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

DOORS:



giving children opportunities to *respond* to all of this; to **do** something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot easily be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to children for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways;

- Use of the transformation progression and observing and listening to children;
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values;
- Sharing of classroom work and practice;
- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training;
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diaries, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art;
- Regular inclusion in the SEF;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

This policy was adopted by the governors : September 2022

The policy will be reviewed: September 2024

Appendix Extract from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance; Advice for Schools and SIAMS Inspectors 2018

1. Spirituality and mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published some useful guidance on spirituality and mental health where they identify ways in which some aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health. They identify spirituality as being within and beyond formal religion and recognise that it 'often becomes more important to people in times of emotional stress and physical and mental illness, loss, bereavement and the approach to death.

They recommend that a person with a religious belief may need support which acknowledges and gives space to their faith as part of their support. Schools should therefore look to provide opportunities for inclusive spiritual development that supports good mental health as well as opportunities to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and supports their mental health and wellbeing. Religious Education which offers the opportunity for young people to engage with a diversity of people can support this. Schools would also benefit from building relationships with the religious leaders in their community.