

Whittington Church of England Primary
School

Spirituality Policy

May 2023



Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.'

John 15:16

In Whittington CE Primary School, we recognise that developing the spirituality of our pupils and adults is a fundamental aspect of enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Our school's distinctively Christian vision;

We are inspired by Jesus to learn with joy and flourish in love, faith and wisdom. Together, we live and grow well, valuing and respecting our differences and sharing our God given gifts. We aspire to be courageous and responsible, caring for our world and one another today – for a better tomorrow.

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allows all adults and pupils to develop their spiritual capabilities, and to live fruitfully as individuals with the school, local and global communities.

Our school vision is integral to everything we do at Whittington CE Primary School. We want our children to develop a love for themselves, others and for their learning so that they can develop empathy, faith and wisdom and be confident to follow their dreams and aspirations. Spiritual development at Whittington encourages everyone to be reflective about their own beliefs, to show respect for themselves and one another and develop an understanding of their feelings and what is important to them so that we can all live well together. Our vision inspires us to share and celebrate our gifts and talents and use them wisely to take care of God's creation and one another. Opportunities for spiritual development are well planned and of high quality enabling the whole school community to be engaged in a journey of discovery.

Spiritual development differs from person to person and is a very personal experience. For this reason, it is difficult to put into words. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith. For Christians in church, spirituality is about developing a deeper understanding of and connection with God. It is about God's way of being with us and our way of being with God. Through this we are able to respond to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a church, but it is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. Family backgrounds may be very different and spiritual development must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

Therefore, in light of this and in light of our school's distinctively Christian vision, at Whittington CE Primary school we define spirituality as follows:

Spirituality is about understanding that we are part of something bigger. It's a connection, rooted in love, with ourselves, others and God which supports an understanding of our place in the world and how we can help all of Creation to flourish

Aims and Guiding Principles

Through establishing the right learning environment in which spiritual development can be fostered, we aim to support pupils and adults to:

- 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
- foster self-awareness and the ability 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
- develop a love of 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 pupils and adults 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.

Guiding principles

Spiritual development contains many facets and it is concerned with a number of areas of an individual's life. Therefore, when developing spirituality in pupils and adults, we, in line with our distinctively Christian vision and our school's definition for spirituality, look at four key areas:

- **Self**
 - Awareness of feelings: ability to reflect and express.
 - Awareness of our uniqueness: happiness with who we are.
 - Gratitude for the things we have and the person we are.
 - Exploration of personal faith.
 - Development of imagination and creativity.
- **Others**
 - Empathy and understanding: respect.
 - To love and be loved (loving your neighbour).
 - Making a difference: duty.
- **Transcendence (Beyond)**
 - Encountering / experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material / physical).
 - Ability to ask and discuss the 'Big Questions' (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God).
 - Opportunities for prayer, connecting with God.
 - Making sense of the world.
- **Nature**
 - Developing a sense of awe and wonder.
 - Enjoying the miracles of everyday life.
 - Taking time for what really matters.
 - Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature, etc.

Approaches to Spiritual Development

In Whittington CE Primary school, we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to pupils' spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy
- allowing pupils 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 pupils to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values

- enabling pupils 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.

As part of our approach to spiritual development, we use the follow strategy in our school:

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

We provide WINDOWS throughout our curriculum. We have lessons with an awe and wonder focus using a variety of stimuli including photos, videos, music, current events ad real-life stories.

MIRRORS: giving pupils 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.

MIRRORS are used throughout high quality RE lessons; pupils are consistently challenged to reflect on their learning about religion to help them learn from religion, regardless of whether they have a specific faith.

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

Pupils in our school identify DOORS. They may hear of a local issue or an international event and request to take action through fund-raising and raising awareness – this is often done via school council, worship leaders but our pupils have the confidence that they know they are listened to and respected by adults in the school and will raise issues and concerns independently.

Planning, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

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 pupils
- Collective Worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for pupils 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 pupils' 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
- opportunities are provided for pupils to listen attentively and observe carefully, to listen with discernment, to value what is good and worthwhile and to make judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas
- support is provided for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others
- that the outstanding RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives
- that pupils 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
- strategies for positive mental health are promoted.

Monitoring and evaluation

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

- observing and listening to pupils
- 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. RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art

- regular inclusion in the SEF
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools
- regular diocesan Spirituality review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- provide a statement within the school prospectus which makes clear that the aims of spiritual development within the school are based on its Christian foundation, but are inclusive in practice
- in conjunction with the Headteacher, monitor the effectiveness of spirituality within the school and make recommendations for its development in accordance with the SIAMS Schedule.

The Headteacher/ Collective worship lead will:

- co-ordinate timetabling / themes across the year(s) into long, medium and short-term planning, in conjunction with the school and church community, so that spirituality can be embedded throughout the curriculum
- ensure that the school prospectus, welcome / induction pack and website have clear statements about the school's ethos for developing spirituality and its distinction from moral, social and cultural development
- be a part of the SIAMS inspection process
- support other members of staff
- know where to access good resources to support spiritual development
- lead staff meetings or provide quality CPD other sources that have a focus on development of spirituality.

Staff will:

- support the crucial role that spiritual development plays within the school
- plan and lead activities for the development of spirituality when required
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect, question and be inspired
- understand the school's definition of spirituality and promote it where possible.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This support is provided by Diocese of Worcester Education Team and regular reviews in staff meetings.

Training needs for staff may be identified through regular subject leader audits as well as performance management cycles.

Resources

A number of resources are available to support the development of spiritual development within school including:

- Creative Prayer boxes
- Roots and Fruits
- iSing Pop worship
- Diocesan Wellbeing and Spirituality Compendium
- Class based reflection area resources.

Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the Governing Board every 5 years. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in the SIAMS Schedule for Inspections
- a change in the understanding of spiritual development.

Approval / review by Governing Board:

Headteacher signed:
Chair of Governors signed:
Date of next review:

Date:
Date:
Date: