



# SPIRITUALITY POLICY

**SEPTEMBER 2022**

HEADTEACHER: MR K RONDEAU

**LOVING, GROWING** and **SUCCESSING TOGETHER**

**VISION:** The ability to think about or plan the future with imagination and wisdom.

## LOVING

### Every Day Counts

Every school day is crammed full of enjoyable experiences. Children want to come into school because learning is fun.

**1 Timothy 6:17**

Put their hope in God, who richly furnishes us with everything to enjoy.

## GROWING

### The Child is at the Centre

Everything we do is for the benefit of the children in our care. We tend to, nurture and grow each child so they believe that their life is brimming with possibility and opportunity.

**Ezekiel 17:4-6**

Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil.

## SUCCEEDING

### Aspirational & Expectational

We, as a school community, strive to grow and improve personally, academically and socially. St Mark's children do amazing things.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**

"They are to do good, to be rich in good deeds, liberal and generous, thus laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life which is life indeed."

## TOGETHER

### Community, Family and the Team

Relationships between children, the adults in school, parents and the wider community are underpinned by our Christian Values. We work with one another, for one another.

**John 15:12**

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

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## School Statement on Spirituality and Spiritual Development

In St Mark's C of E 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, which can be found on page 2, is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on 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 St Mark's C of E Primary School we define spirituality as:

*"Spirituality is recognising the value of connections; with ourselves, with others, with beauty and the beyond – where we embrace questions and reflect upon the wonder of existence, allowing us to love, grow and succeed together."*

### 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

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- 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

As outlined within the school's definition of Spirituality, connections with self, others, the beyond and nature form the cornerstone of our Spirituality. Examples of this include:

- **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 St Mark's C of E 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 strategies in our school:

1. Giving the pupils opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to wonder about things that are amazing in life and the world. Through this, pupils are learning about life in all its fullness and glory. These moments occur naturally and frequently through the school's curriculum where photos, videos, music, current events and stories promote a sense of awe and wonder.
2. Giving pupils opportunities to reflect on their experiences; to ponder 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. This occurs through high quality RE lessons where pupils are challenged to reflect on their learning about religion to help them learn from religion, regardless of whether they have a specific faith.
3. 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. In this way they are learning to live by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value. For example, if children hear of a local or international issue or event, they can and will request to take action through raising awareness and active participation. This happens through class, phase and collective worship as well as Pupil Ambassadors. Children 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. reflective diary, 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 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. 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:

- Roots and Fruits
- Diocesan Wellbeing and Spirituality Compendium
- Diocesan Prayer 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 2 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.