

St John's C of E Primary School



Policy For Spirituality

Introduction

At St John's, all aspects of school life reflect our vision 'A family of equal, unique and diverse people, made in the image of God, together aspiring to fulfil our God-given potential by nourishing 'the Fruit of the Spirit' in our lives'. This includes a child's spiritual development. Spirituality is a journey which is continuous. It is about seeking a meaningful connection with the world around you, making sense of the world and understanding your own place in it. It is not something that is taught but is interwoven into all aspects of our school life.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

At St John's, we understand Spirituality to be:

"Knowing and being ourselves, being aware of and caring for others, and about knowing the world around us through questioning and a sense of awe and wonder. Spiritual development means being concerned with a child's inner growth, with their emotional growth, their understanding of and acceptance of themselves to allow each individual to reach their full potential.'

The language of Spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter.' (Isaiah 64:8)

The spiritual is not only expressed in religious terms; it has much wider boundaries which can permeate all human experience and understanding. So response to the spiritual can be seen in:

- a heightened awareness of natural beauty
- a feeling of inner space
- a celebration of worthwhile activities in school
- a feeling of loss or sadness at some tragic news
- a motivation to a life of caring for others as well as a religious interpretation
- a commitment to a religious order
- belonging to a Church community
- adherence to religious rules and standards of behaviour

In our work with children, an open response to the spiritual is necessary. Undoubtedly, children will bring into the classroom a variety of experiences and may need careful handling so as to alleviate fear and enable positive reflections as a counter balance.

Intent

Our aims for spiritual development are that all children:

- Will become increasingly aware of self. They will understand themselves as a unique individual.
- Will be able to build positive relationships with others- a growing empathy, concern and compassion and understand the impact of their actions on another person.
- Will become more familiar with the beauty of the natural world, developing their own perspective and relationship with the world. Children will be able to understand the emotional response the natural world provokes.
- Will become increasingly aware of the relationship with the transcendental. The children search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.
- Will develop the ability to ask and answer big questions.
- Will have an understanding of Christianity and some other world religions. Children will be respectful towards the feelings and beliefs of others.

These may involve a search for meaning, a transcendent quality, a wholeness or oneness in one's inner being, an experience of awe and wonder, and a heightened quality in an event or encounter, a sensing of the divine presence. All these are characteristic of the spiritual area which our school community may experience and do experience as part of their spiritual development.

To gain access and respond to these experiences, children need to acquire certain skills:

- Reflection
- Stilling
- Inner awareness
- Listening to oneself
- Questioning, searching for meaning
- Ability to communicate feelings and spiritual sensitivities
- Interpretation
- Empathy for others as feeling, thinking people.

As children leave St. John's at the end of Year 6, they will have:

- A sense of awe, wonder and the mysteries of life
- An imaginative approach to the world
- A reflective attitude to the natural world
- A sense of pattern, sequence and order

- A spirit of enquiry and open mindedness
- An awareness that life evolves and there are moral choices between good and bad
- A sense of life's joys and achievements
- A sense of meaning, purpose and direction
- An awareness of suffering, pain and loss
- An awareness of community - its demands, values, rituals and celebrations
- A sense of others as feeling, thinking persons
- An increasing ability to empathise with others
- The capacity to empathise and respond to religious activities such as worship, prayer, communion, sacrifice, pilgrimage
- The capacity to empathise with other faiths
- The capacity to be still
- The capacity to be aware of one's own ability to reflect
- The capacity to be aware of one's own uniqueness – "I am special"
- A sense of the holy
- An increasing awareness of God in one's own life and in the life of others
- The increasing ability to question one's beliefs and actions, and those of others, in a search for meaning
- The ability to communicate responses and feelings with increasing confidence and self-esteem

Implementation

- The RE curriculum is known by all the school community, highlighted and given time in INSET planning with the appropriate resources.
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- The acts of daily collective Worship at St John's provide opportunities to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality is shared. Worship traditions are valued and explored as appropriate to the children's backgrounds, interests and abilities, starting with a living witness to the 'Christian faith'. Through stories, song, reflection, prayer, readings and discussion, children are able to contemplate and develop all areas of Spirituality.
- The spiritual dimension, giving recognition to affective responses in the learning process, is mapped in topic themes, across the curriculum, so that there is 'space for the spirit'.
- The Christian value of our church school is seen in practice through staff relationships, pupil/staff relationships, relationships with the community and our standards of behaviour.
- The professional development offered to teachers heightens their awareness that the development of spirituality across the curriculum is fundamental to the development of the complete child.

The curriculum supports and gives legitimacy to:

- the exploration of feelings
- the development of attitudes
- the development of ideas
- the inspiring of the imagination
- the faith witness of believers
- the spiritual search
- planned opportunities for awe and wonder
- Opportunities for big questions throughout the curriculum

To see where Spirituality opportunities are promoted across our curriculum, refer to the Spirituality progression grids.

Within the Vision of the school, pupils will be acquiring integrity of personal values, having explored those presented to them via the many relationships that make up school life. Embracing and displaying the school values contributes towards an individual's spiritual development.

Impact

Prayer and calm areas are available throughout school to allow children opportunities to pray or reflect, providing them with time to be still and to connect with themselves. Children build meaningful relationships with others and develop a strong sense of empathy, understanding the impact of their actions and words on others whether negative or positive. Children understand and appreciate their uniqueness and can celebrate their differences. Through the curriculum and their journey to become courageous advocates, children have a strong desire to make a

difference in the world such as looking after the environment or helping those in need.

Collective worship and RE lessons provide children with a safe space to develop Spirituality, providing them opportunities to explore their own faith and beliefs. They are encouraged to ask big questions and challenge thinking, not only, in worship and RE but also across the curriculum and our Big Question Board allows them to their philosophical thinking.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure opportunities are provided throughout the curriculum to enhance spirituality.

Our spirituality lead is responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in collective worship, the whole curriculum (including RE) and the general ethos of the school within daily life. This role also includes:

- Ensuring subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in CPD and sharing good practise, training staff where necessary.
- Contributing to the development of the SEF
- Engage children and staff in collective worship
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality.
- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual development through the curriculum