



St Mary's CE Primary School  
N8 7QN

# Policy for Spirituality

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you."  
(John 15:12)

## Our Vision

As we love, we flourish  
As we flourish, we aspire  
As we aspire, we achieve  
Together, we are a family.

**Friendship, Compassion, Hope, Wisdom,  
Community, Endurance.**

|                     |  |                |
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| Approved by:        | Children, Family & Community Committee | Date: May 2021 |
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| Next review due by: | May 2025                               |                |

**St. Mary's CE Primary school**  
**Spirituality policy**

Through our daily school life at St Mary's Church of England Primary School we encourage our children to build respectful friendships and demonstrate compassion towards others. Through this we build a strong community spirit, as together we are a family. Our teaching and learning provides the children with the wisdom and endurance they need to expand their minds socially, morally and academically so allowing them to achieve and flourish and fulfil 'Life in all its Fullness.' (John 10:10). We encourage our children to demonstrate and develop a dignity in their work and themselves which enables them to hope to aspire to be the best they can possibly be.

**Statement of intent**

Young children have a natural openness to the presence of God in their lives and a readiness to talk about spirituality. Naturally full of awe and wonder, children are open to having their innate amazement in the face of creation nourished and cherished which is what we aim to achieve at St. Mary's CE Primary school.

The promotion of spirituality in reflecting, discussing, teaching and learning is an opportunity not only for children to be affirmed that they are loved as the created beings that they are; but also, through a consideration of the teachings of Christianity and other faiths, they can learn the way that love naturally overflows in ways of loving service to our sisters and our brothers at home, at school, in the community and around the world.

We celebrate our distinctive Christian identity at St Mary's through promotion of our vision and values and the aim of achieving the Church of England's belief that education is 'Life in all its fullness,' (John 10:10) which help us to keep in our minds and hearts the intention to love like Jesus.

At St Mary's we put a special emphasis on the importance of learning the value of stillness in our lives. It is important that children learn to be still and that stillness is not just about being quiet. In our stillness God can speak to our hearts and we can discover the love of God for each of us personally. The first requisite for listening to each other and rhythm of creation around us is to learn the value of interior silence. (Father Bruce, Hornsey Parish Church, 2019)

At St Mary's C of E Primary school we describe spirituality as a way to enable us to become aware of one another, the world around us, ourselves and God which allows us to flourish. Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions and an increasing awareness of the meaning and purpose of life which affects everyone and is not dependant on a religious affiliation. It involves a growing sense of love, empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how our values and principles affect our relationships with others. It is an appreciation of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful. The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both set backs and praise and allowing us to achieve and aspire. (St. Mary's staff 2020)

**Aims**

In order to foster spiritual development, the school aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God.
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive Christian vision of the 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.
- Experience feelings of wonder.
- 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.
- 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 understanding of themselves and their place in the world.
- 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, compassion, friendship, endurance, wisdom, hope, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity.

### **Teaching and learning**

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

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values as well as the Church of England's vision of 'Life in all its fullness (John 10:10).
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life.
- Unplanned and spontaneous spiritual experiences are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and children.
- Collective worship and RE develop a relationship with 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.
- The school, church and other sacred places are used across the curriculum, giving children the opportunity to explore their own spirituality.
- 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 1).
- That the RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives.
- The children are provided with opportunities to explore Big Questions through RE and UNICEF's Rights Respecting School's programme.
- 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 incorporating meditation, reflection, moments of stillness and mindfulness (see Appendix 2).
- Any regular visitors to the school to support spirituality teaching are DBS or list 99 checked.

### **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 by:

- 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.
- Weekly high quality RE lessons in line with the LDBS syllabus.
- 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 a safe environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder, consider Big questions and ethical dilemmas and go beyond academic learning.
- To have regular opportunities to engage in Rights Respecting Schools debate and discussion.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

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

- 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. Floor books, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art, music, reactions to stories, science, humanities and trips.
- Regular inclusion in the SEF.

- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the RE, Collective Worship, Behaviour, mental Health Policy, SMSC.

**Appendix 1: Windows, mirrors and doors approach to spirituality.** (Taken from Salisbury Diocese Sprituality 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 'OVs' (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.

## **Appendix 2: Extract from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance; Advice for Schools and SIAMS Inspectors 2018**

### **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.

### **Related Policies**

Religious Education policy

SMSC policy

British Values policy

Collective Worship policy

Wellbeing and mental health policy