

St Peter's



Church of England
Primary School

St. Peter's Church of England Primary School

Guidelines for understanding and promoting Spiritual Development

In our school our vision shapes all we do.

We are a welcoming, inclusive family with a strong Christian ethos. We continually aim to be an excellent school where people care more than others think is wise, risk more than others think is safe, dream more than others think is practical and expect more than others think is possible.

As part of our commitment to the promotion of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development we provide a vast array of opportunities through our broad, knowledge rich curriculum together with a detailed extra curricula offer with a vast array of clubs, visits and experiences. We understand that SMSC fits into our Vision for Excellence in *what we do, in who we are and in our service with others.*

These guidelines relate purely to our understanding of Spiritual Development.

OFSTED describe provision for spiritual development as supporting pupils to develop their:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- Knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feeling and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences

We would want to extend this shared/common understanding of Spiritual development to include the following "building blocks":

Self Awareness or Self Knowledge

All humans need to be aware of, and acknowledge, their own inner life of thoughts, feelings and emotions. What does it mean to be human? This is an important part of developing self-respect, a sense of identity and self-worth. In turn, this enables us to value and respect others. Pupils will be given a range of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and responses to personal experiences.

Forming Relationships

An important part of personal growth is being able to develop relationships with others, recognising them as people of worth and value. This includes developing a sense of community and building social relationships. Pupils will be given the opportunity to develop an understanding of both their individual and group identity and to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships.

Asking Ultimate Questions

This is the search for meaning and purpose in life. It involves asking questions such as "Does life have a purpose/meaning?", "Why me?" in times of suffering, or "What happens when you die?" The youngest children often ask the most profound questions of this type, and deserve to be taken seriously when they

do so. We believe that it is important that this area of reflection and challenge is encouraged, not stifled. Ultimate questions are not limited only to RE and collective worship, but can arise at any time.

Hope

As a Church School we want to bring a sense of hope to all that we do. In our teaching and learning there is hope for all to achieve their own excellence and within our attitude to behaviour that everyone can begin again and restore what has been broken or lost.

Uncertainty, Awe and Wonder

In historical and spatial terms each individual is insignificant. An awareness of one's place in the world enables a person to live with natural doubt and uncertainty and encourages the search for meaning in life. When faced with eternity and infinity, or the wonders of the natural world and human achievements, feelings of awe and wonder are also a natural response. For some this may include experiencing feelings of transcendence which give rise to belief in the existence of God. It may also encourage a belief in ideals and possibilities of rising above one's present experience of the world (e.g. by adopting and supporting specific causes or issues). As we face the growing issue of climate change it is also right to help pupils explore causes and how we might live to preserve the earth. Pupils will be given opportunities to reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life and to experience moments of stillness and reflection, for example in Collective Worship.

Beliefs and Values

This is the search for, and development of, personal beliefs and values which may or may not be shared with other members of the community. This naturally may include the development of religious beliefs, and as a church school we seek to be a supportive environment in which people can explore and clarify their own beliefs.

Creativity

This is the exercising of the imagination or intuition and insight so as to express one's innermost thoughts and feelings, especially through the creative arts. Creative work can be an important tool for exploring some of the other areas of spiritual development, including the Creative Curriculum, Music, Art and opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Feelings and Emotions

The sense of being moved by kindness or beauty, or being hurt by hatred and injustice. This should bring a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions. Pupils will be able to foster their emotional life and express their feelings in the community of the church school, knowing themselves to be accepted and loved as unique individuals.

We recognise that these areas of experience are common to most people - they are the "third dimension" of existence alongside the physical and the mental. All the above experiences may be explained and explored in both religious and non-religious terms and demonstrates our commitment as a church school open to those with other faiths and beliefs.

Spirituality- Across the Curriculum including Collective Worship.

When planning, staff consider such things as;

a) The careful selection of individual and class reading books so as to encourage discussion of issues. Story often helps explore the inexpressible; stories may challenge, help children to understand particular experiences or encourage empathy. Story is a verbal symbol which has long been used to challenge or nurture - as in the parables of Jesus. Investigate which stories are popular with pupils and which they love to revisit at various levels. What positive viewpoints and messages do these offer? Do they stretch the imagination and promote ideas and questions?

b) Setting aside time in PSHCE to actively value individuals e.g. use of Circle Time as a valuable tool for the expression of thoughts and feelings. Build a regular slot into the school day for reflection

c) Science and environmental issues can raise ultimate questions about creation and the role of humankind. "Why is the world like this?" Ethical questions are an integral part of the modern scientific world. The study of natural forces is a tool for awe and wonder and a stimulus to creativity. An awareness of order and pattern in the world is formed.

d) English, music, art and drama are all highly creative areas of the curriculum and will also be used to explore important issues of many kinds.

e) Religious Education and collective worship allow time for reflection, empathy, exploration of value and belief systems, and the exploration of community. In collective worship children will be given the opportunity to be active worship leaders e.g. writing prayers, selecting hymns and music.

f) History and geography give the opportunity to empathise with others of different times and cultures. They may raise moral questions e.g. child labour in the Victorian period. Geography can raise questions of justice and equity and our care for the natural environment.

g) PE helps people to explore their own capabilities, develop positive attitudes towards others and experience co-operation and teamwork. Pupils have the opportunity to deal with both success and failure.

h) Community work will promote a concern for the common good, other people and the environment.

i) Timetabled opportunities for stillness and reflection are provided. There is a quiet time in the day when everyone has time to read or think.

j) The children are involved in decision making and taking responsibility so that they can see they are of value in the community. The School Council is an important way of ensuring that all children potentially have a voice in whole school issues.

Christian Spirituality

As a Church School we are also clear that an understanding of Spiritual Development within the Christian tradition encompasses all that has been previously mentioned but also includes learning to be a disciple of Jesus and developing a growing identity based on specific beliefs about the nature of God, Creation, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and the Kingdom of God. These concepts are introduced in Religious Education as a way in which we learn about the faith and we will sometimes talk specifically about "what Christians believe".

This Christian concept of Spiritual Development and growing Christian identity is also seen in our acts of Collective worship and is explained more fully in our Collective Worship Policy. For example, a Christian understanding of Spiritual development will also be expressed in our teaching of prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and also through our choice of songs. However, in order to be inclusive of all faiths and none, children will always have the choice to actively engage with this or to sit quietly and respectfully as an observer.

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