

## SPIRITUALITY POLICY

### Christian Vision of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Growing together through faith in Jesus Christ *'Let all you do be done in love'* (1 Corinthians 16:14).

Knowing God through Jesus in our lives let us share, experience and live happiness, laughter and joy in a welcoming, inclusive and loving Christian place.

In the eyes of God and with all your heart let us embrace opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate success and difference.

By sharing the fruits of the spirit let us shine out for others to see that we are tolerant, respectful, wise and hopeful in this community and God's world.

In journey and love, remember *'I am with you always'* (Matthew 28:20)

We feel that this statement sums up succinctly what we wish to achieve at St Thomas' for our school community.

**We are privileged in our school to be the introduction children have to their formal education:**

At St Thomas' CE Primary we endeavour to:

- Create the right atmosphere for children to work, grow and develop their individual potential, helping them to become competent and confident adults able to live their own lives and contribute to society.
- Provide a climate where children learn to co-operate with others, care for their peers and environment, respecting the fact that not everyone looks, feels or thinks the same.

As a Voluntary Aided school with strong links with the church we expect to see Christian attitudes forming the basis of the whole school ethos with the church, the school and the community working together. High standards are set for behaviour where children are encouraged to be thoughtful, honest, fair and kind.

At St Thomas' CE Primary School Spiritual Development is defined as:

**Nurturing and celebrating the unique value and self-worth of each member of our school family, weaving spirituality like a thread through the fabric of our school, enriching who we are.**

**Spirituality is about creating precious moments to transform thoughts, actions and our senses. It is the capacity to be still and reflect with awe and wonder on the beauty and possibilities of the human and natural world ... and beyond.**

*'Spirituality is seen as integral to what education and being a growing child (of any faith or none) is all about, as essential as intellectual or social development'.*

*Rebecca Nye*

At St Thomas' CE Primary School we believe that:

- All pupils have the capacity for spiritual growth which includes growing self-awareness, reflection, empathy, imagination and creativity.
- All pupils can have spiritual experiences and these will be unique and may transform self in a moment or over time.
- All pupils can develop a deeper spiritual understanding which enables them to make sense of the spiritual experiences encountered.
- All pupils can develop an understanding of how spiritual experiences may impact on our lives and how these may shape the way in which we live.

At St Thomas' CE Primary School we seek to develop spirituality by planning for the possibility of spiritual moments across the curriculum. These are often found in RE or Collective Worship but can be experienced through Science e.g. looking at the beauty of plants or the wonder of outer space.

*"The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me a continual spiritual journey"*

*Leo Buscaglia*

Spiritual reflection can be encouraged through art, music, poetry, geography, photography, history, current affairs and within outdoor learning opportunities.

We encourage children to ask and reflect upon Big Questions when mind mapping topics, engaging with themes or when discussing and responding to issues in the world today.

However, spiritual moments can just happen. We seek to give all children the time and space needed to have quiet moments in which self is transformed in some way.

We strive to do this by considering three different openings for spiritual development based on the work of Liz Mills:



**Windows:** Opportunities to look out on the world to gaze and wonder; the things we find amazing and which take our breath away as well as the things that disturb or worry us (the wow / ow moments). Learning about life in all its fullness through the lives of inspirational people and stories.



**Mirrors:** Opportunities for children to reflect, to look inwards and consider The Big Questions in life; to explore their own thoughts. Learning from life by exploring our own insights and others.



**Doors:** Opportunities for the children to respond, to go through the door and to do something creative that reflects an expression of their own thoughts and convictions. Learning to live out their beliefs.

This is linked to the four elements of spirituality:

Self		Others
World/Beauty		Beyond/Divine

**Self**

Being a unique person and understanding self-perception and how you relate to...

**Others**

How empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships.

**World/Beauty**

Perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to nature and art.

**Beyond/Divine**

Relating to the transcendental and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday', a connection with God.

Our definition reflects all four elements and seeks to transform through a range of openings for spiritual experiences.

**Assessment**

Spirituality is not assessed as we believe this to be a highly personal part of a child's holistic development. We do, however, talk to the children about their thoughts and feelings if these are expressed creatively e.g. through artwork, poetry, reflective writing etc. We believe this is a thoughtful and respectful approach.

***'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope'.***

***Romans 15:13***