

# **St Mary's C of E School**

## **Spirituality Policy (part of SMSC)**



<b>Date agreed:</b>	<b>September 2017</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Headteacher:</b>
<b>Signed</b>	<b>Chair of governors:</b>
<b>Date for review:</b>	<b>September 2019</b>

## MISSION STATEMENT

This Policy is carried out within the context and spirit of the school's Mission Statement. It supports and reinforces the aims of St Mary's C of E Primary School, valuing all children equally and as individuals.

Our mission statement:

- Stimulate in every child a sense of curiosity and excitement about the world and encourage them to search for truth, meaning and purpose in life
- Educate pupils intellectually, socially, morally, aesthetically physically and spiritually within a school based on the example of Jesus in the gospels
- Show pastoral care, encouraging in pupils a sense of commitment, self-reliance, respect for others and a healthy self esteem
- Make prayer and worship a real educational experience

## DEFINING OUR APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

At St Mary's C of E School the promotion of pupils' spiritual development is an integral dimension of school life. Therefore spiritual development permeates and is promoted through all areas of the curriculum and through the ethos of the school and daily collective worship.

Understanding of self and others is at the heart of spiritual development and is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith. Spiritual development is accessible to everyone. It involves accompanying children of all faiths and none, in their search for self and identity, recognising that this search will not always result in following the Christian way.

However as a Church of England school, we place special emphasis on the specific teaching and beliefs of the Christian faith, both within the daily life of the school and through the curriculum.

## DEFINING CHILDREN'S SPIRITUALITY

At St Mary's C of E School we use the following definitions of children's spirituality to guide our practise:

- God's ways of being with children and children's ways of being with God

And

- Children's spirituality is an *initially natural capacity* for awareness of the sacred quality to life experiences. This awareness can be *conscious* or *unconscious*, and sometimes fluctuates between both, but in both cases can affect actions, feelings and thoughts.

## **AIMS FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Aims**

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

- Develop the ability to listen and be still;
- Develop the ability to reflect;
- 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 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 the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of 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.

## **PROVISION FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

For children's spirituality to develop and flourish, there must be trust that school is a safe place where their doubts, fears and questions will be listened to. There is a shared understanding that the spiritual life of the school is the wellspring of moral, social and cultural development and all that makes the community what it is and strives to become.

Opportunities for spiritual development are pro-actively planned into all aspects of the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life. These are recorded on the Spiritual Progression grids completed by all staff. However, it is recognised that opportunities for spiritual development can also occur spontaneously. Staff review and revise the spiritual grids yearly.

## **THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

Collective Worship provides daily opportunities for the children's spirituality to develop and flourish. Children are given the opportunity to learn from the example of Jesus through gospel stories and other Biblical teaching. This forms the root of the Christian values that shape our whole school ethos, ensuring that Collective Worship is a central activity in the life of our school.

Within RE, Collective Worship and PSHE, the school will:

- allow pupils to investigate and reflect upon their own beliefs and values;
- provide opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the 'darker' side of life;
- provide opportunities for prayer/reflection/silence, the exploration of inner space;
- encourage a balance of music, speech, silence and the creative arts when exploring spiritual

development.

- explore the use of symbol, image, allegory and metaphor in the curriculum;
- explore what commitment means;
- always invite a response and never coerce.

### **CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**

The curriculum and all areas of our community life is explicitly rooted in Christian values.

Within the Curriculum, pupils will be able to explore

- an imaginative approach to the world;
- a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness;
- an approach to the holy or the sacred;
- an awareness of order and pattern in the world

Children will be encouraged pupils to express their creativity and imagination.

We foster a sense of respect for the integrity of each person and create an atmosphere which enables children and staff to speak freely about their beliefs.

### **OUR SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Within our school we have:

- Early Years class and Key stage 1 classes have reflection areas in their classrooms.
- A place for reflection, stillness and prayer in the school hall. This includes an interactive reflection area linked to our focused Christian value for the half term and a prayer tree where children have the opportunity to write their own prayers and hang them on the tree. During the school year there are also opportunities to write prayers for more specific occasions.

We are currently developing the secret garden with the children and plan for this to include a place for reflection and stillness.

Beyond the Formal Curriculum, the school will:

- Encourage children to express such feelings as transcendence, wonder, transience and change, paradox and unease, injustice or inequality whilst listening carefully to others' questions and responses;
- Treat pupils, staff and governors with respect, regardless of personal feelings;
- The school has built close involvement with the St Mary's Church with themes being explored in school and across Penlee Cluster. Children regularly contribute and participate in leading church services and often contribute to the Daily Shouts on Penlee Cluster website.

## **Assessment of Spiritual Development**

We recognise that whilst we can endeavour to provide opportunities for Spiritual development the usual models for assessing cannot apply to spiritual development. All staff need to be mindful to 'invite but not coerce' responses. We strongly acknowledge that children are their own agents in forming their individual belief base.

Through carefully thought-out opportunities we *may* be able to gauge children's involvement and response to opportunities which *may* show the child

- becoming aware of God in their life and in the life of others
- becoming aware of and reflecting on experience
- questioning and exploring the meaning of experience
- understanding and evaluating a range of possible responses and interpretations
- developing personal views and insights and a grasp of the intangible
- applying the insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to one's own life
- acquiring a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion.
- development is best seen through pupil's relationships and conversations with others.

Pupil conferencing will be carried out each year on this area with the Governors for SMSC and a member of staff. This will involve a group of KS1 and KS2 children talking about their understanding of Spirituality.

## **Responsibilities**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Church Foundation of the school is honoured and that the SMSC Policy promotes an ethos based on Christian principles and practice.
- ensuring that the SMSC is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate governor

The SMSC co-ordinator is responsible for:

- Understand the impact that good spiritual (moral, social and cultural) development can have on the school as a whole.
- Overseeing the planning, the provision and the monitoring and evaluation of Spirituality development.
- Keep in touch with national developments and will act in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues.

- Provide staff with updates of information.

### **Monitoring and evaluating Spirituality**

This is an on-going process. There is a staff meeting each term set aside to evaluate previous term opportunities and to develop Spirituality opportunities for the term ahead.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links with the existing:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Equality Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- RE Policy
- Collective Worship
- SMC Policy
- Overall Curriculum Policies

And will link with:

- PSHE

### **RESOURCES**

Developing Children's Spirituality resource box is kept in the staff room with books and articles linked to this area.

Key text: Developing Children's Spirituality by Rebecca Nye Useful Websites:

Penlee Cluster: [www.penleecluster.org](http://www.penleecluster.org).

Diocese of Salisbury: [www.salisbury.anglican.org](http://www.salisbury.anglican.org)

Diocese of Norwich: [www.dioceseofnorwich.org](http://www.dioceseofnorwich.org)

Diocese of Bristol: [www.bristol.anglican.org](http://www.bristol.anglican.org) (good SMSC lesson plans)

### **REVIEW**

The Governing Body will review this policy, formally, two years from the date of its adoption. Informal Review may be necessary in the interim and should take place as and when required.

